

# LAWN TENNIS



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# LAWN TENNIS

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## THE SERVICE



[Photo]

[Illustrations Bureau

*As I throw the ball up, about a foot in front of my right shoulder, the weight of my body is about evenly divided between the two feet and rests rather on their forepart. As I strike the ball, my weight comes forward on to the left foot, the right foot leaves the ground and makes a stride forward and over the line after the ball has been struck.*



# LAWN TENNIS

*How to Improve Your Game*

BY

MRS. L. A. GODFREE

Women's Singles Champion and Mixed  
Doubles Champion, 1924 and 1926

ILLUSTRATED BY 33 ACTION-PHOTOGRAPHS  
AND MANY DIAGRAMS



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## PREFACE

THE author is the first British holder of a Wimbledon Singles Championship since 1914, and, although a *natural* player, is a brilliant exponent of technique, of which she has made a thorough study. She is already well known as a writer of popular articles on lawn tennis.

The central part (Part II) of the book is devoted to stroke production and a technical exposition of all phases and departments of the game ; and the volume forms a complete text-book both for beginners and for those who have already acquired some degree of proficiency, but are desirous of further developing their powers and improving their game. The technical aspect of this section of the work is relieved by a brightness and breadth of treatment which do not exclude the human factor and the lighter side. The author, herself naturally brilliant at lawn tennis, is fully alive to the weaknesses and difficulties of others less favoured by nature, and has the beginner's point of view well before her in these chapters (IV-X).

Her discussion of the value of watching first-class play contains many points that are interesting and instructive, and the examples of famous players introduced in chapter IV are particularly well chosen. Her treatment of the doubles game, in which she also holds the Wimbledon mixed doubles championship, is especially illuminating and original, dwelling, as it does, upon the value of co-operation and close partnership.

The publishers feel that Mrs. Godfree has succeeded in the difficult task of imparting instruction in a manner both lucid and original, which, at the same time, never allows the interest to flag. She avoids one of the commonest faults of books of instruction on games, namely, that of giving the student the impression that it is all perfectly easy.

The final chapters in Part II deal with the psychology of lawn tennis from a very human point of view, leading up naturally to the summit of ambition in the lawn tennis world, namely, successful match play; and, in the chapter on this subject, Mrs. Godfree is able to give the knowledge that she has gained from her own remarkable experience in this field.

THE EDITOR.

WARWICK HOUSE, SALISBURY SQUARE,  
LONDON, E.C.4.

PART I

A General View of Lawn  
Tennis.





## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNING

**L**AWN tennis is one of the good things in the world, one of the things that help and are really worth while. It may sound sententious and even old-fashioned to begin like that, but the ancient saying about a healthy mind in a healthy body is certainly old-fashioned, invented a very long while ago, and none the worse for that. A strenuous hour on the tennis court in the fresh air and sunshine is magnificent medicine for a pessimist. Sport, exhilaration, pleasure and good exercise are all realized more quickly and conveniently at lawn tennis than in any other way that I know ; and that is, perhaps, the chief reason why it is my first favourite amongst outdoor games, why I love it and believe in it.

#### How I Began

It is hard for me to say how I reached

this point of view. It almost seems, on looking back, that I had the good fortune to be born at about the right time, and that the rising tide of lawn tennis caught and carried me along, though such an idea does not do justice to the real value of the game.

During the War, like many others, I had very little time for the outdoor exercise that has always seemed so necessary to me. I used to play tennis during week-ends and whenever I could, and that made me first realize fully its splendid possibilities. My first tournament was at Roehampton in April, 1919. My handicap was then somewhere about + 15, and I was soon defeated ; but by the end of that season my handicap was "owe 30." That summer of 1919 was my beginning, and practically all I have to look back upon in the way of early experiences.

It is at the next stage that the critical period begins for all aspiring players. "To be or not to be" is then the question. The real work, the serious side of the game, then must come.

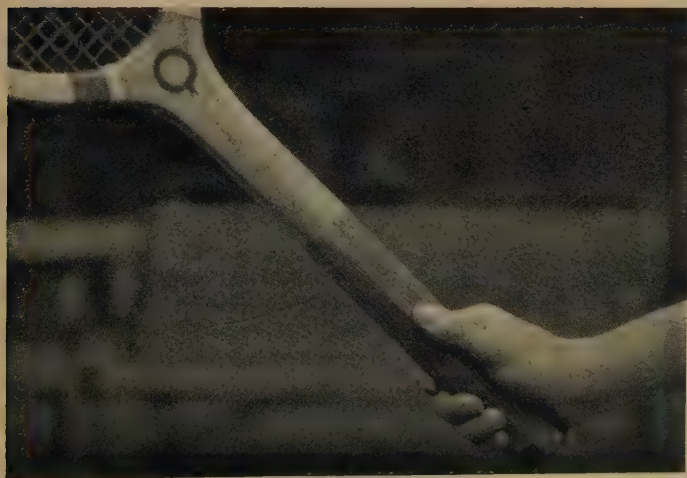
That phrase "the serious side of the game" has sounded odd and contradictory to our French friends in the past. In the days when cricket was the greatest English game, and peculiarly British, they used to

## HOW TO GRIP THE RACKET



### MY FOREHAND GRIP

*I grip with the flat part of the racket handle against that part of the palm of the hand which forms the base of the thumb. Let the grip be firm; keep the wrist supple, but not loose.*



[Photos]

### MY BACKHAND GRIP

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.]

*The handle of the racket is brought a little farther round than for the forehand stroke, so that the flat part of the racket comes more directly in contact with the base of the thumb. The thumb is placed along the handle of the racket to give additional support.*

## THE FOREHAND DRIVE



### THE BEGINNING OF THE STROKE

*The racket is carried well back behind the body, with the arm straight, while the weight of the body is thrown on to the right foot.*



*Photos]*

*[Sport & General*

### THE FINISH OF THE STROKE

*The racket must be carried well through and across the left of the body. This adds considerably to the accuracy and pace of the stroke. The weight of the body has been transferred from the right to the left foot.*

say that the one thing an Englishman could not do was *play* cricket, meaning that, whilst we actually performed supremely well at the game, we made it hard work and not play at all.

### Why England now Lags Behind

Times have changed since then, and England, the Mother Country of all outdoor sports and games, is no longer supreme at them. Why is it that we have fallen back at lawn tennis? There is our climate always ready to take a large share of the blame and to deserve it, also our traditions and our conservatism, in spite of political pretensions in other directions. We have been backward in adopting the game on hard courts and on wood. The necessity for plenty of covered courts in this country is clearly indicated by our climate, yet we have been far behind France in this matter. Our temperament also seems to make development of the fullest capacity for lawn tennis come much later in life, especially with men, than it does in other countries. We have much leeway to make up, but none of the disabilities from which we suffer at present is really serious. If we are not supreme at the game

in the matter of quality, at least we have quantity—a greater number of keen young players, greater devotion to the game than any other European nation ; for devotion to sport has always been one of our national heritages, as simple, safe, and certain as patriotism.

But in speaking of our increasing number of keen young players I am not thinking of schoolboys and schoolgirls, since serious tennis is not yet played to any great extent at school in this country. This has often been cited as a great disadvantage to the game in England. Yet there is much to be said for our tradition of team work in school games. But why should not team work be retained as well? Football at boys' schools would not suffer from the introduction of lawn tennis in summer, from which also the "team" spirit need not be absent. I am too keen and constant a player ever to be pessimistic about it.

### **The Fetters of Tradition**

Tradition and conservatism are amongst our greatest handicaps, although we owe them much. Our national tradition of sport, of course, I believe to be a good thing ; but



it seems to me to be about the clearest proof in the world that it is nonsense to say that you cannot have too much of a good thing. The early days of lawn tennis still persist with us, when it was a game of elegance on the lovely lawns of English country houses, when it would have been considered rather racy or bizarre, according to the point of view, to call it a sport. Our memories, of course, and our lives do not go back to the Victorian days of lawn tennis in England ; but I am thinking of old pictures of women in incredible dresses balancing a racket daintily, as though it were a fan, and tossing a ball straight up into the air. Times have changed, but I believe that we do not shake off our fetters or even exchange them quite so quickly as other races, so that we are liable to lag behind for a time when there is rapid movement in any direction in the world of sport. There may be many people who regret the old-time elegance of lawn tennis, who think that, in expanding, the game has filtered downwards and degenerated ; but if anything has been lost, I believe that far more has been gained. Once a picturesque diversion for a few favoured members of society, lawn tennis is now undoubtedly a national asset.

### Advice to the Rising Generation

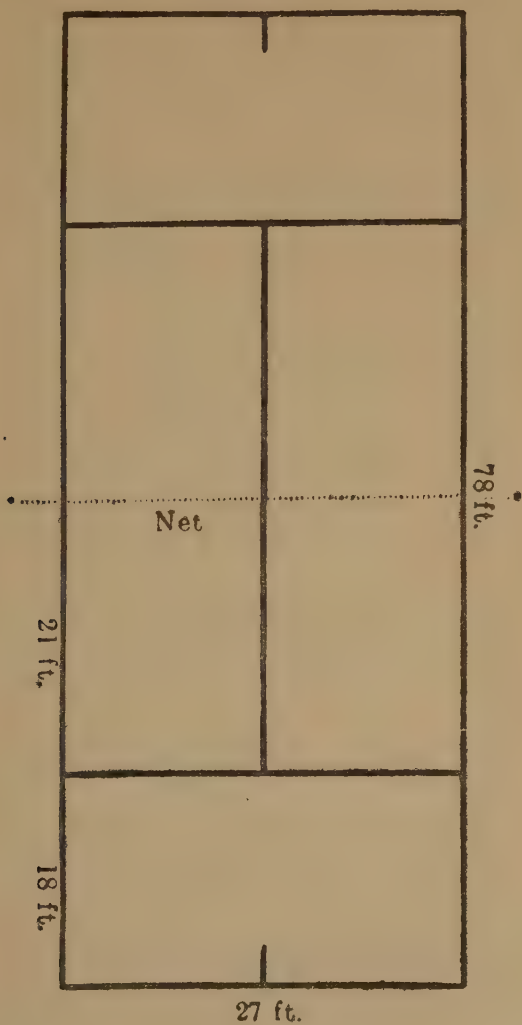
It is hard for me to say how I began and why I went on with lawn tennis ; also it seems to me to be irrelevant—to have happened naturally and of its own accord. But it is much easier to give advice to others, especially to those who are still children or, at any rate, very young, and who contemplate taking up the game seriously.

I do not think that children, especially girls, should begin very young. They should not start seriously before the age of about fourteen unless they happen to be exceptionally strong. Usually a girl of twelve is not able to hold a full-sized racket properly and hit the ball as it should be hit, because she is not strong enough in the arm. In order to make almost any sort of a stroke, she is obliged to hold the racket half-way up the handle, and that starts a bad habit and a bad style, which are very difficult to correct afterwards.

I have played many other games besides lawn tennis, especially badminton, lacrosse, and cricket, and the first of these is very good indeed for children. It is easy for a little girl to begin, at badminton, to acquire the movements for overhead strokes, which do not often come naturally to girls, as they



# PLAN OF THE SINGLES COURT





do to boys. A boy can generally throw a stone or a cricket ball freely and easily, whereas a girl will only toss it underhand. I do not know why this should be so. Doubtless some profound combination of anatomy and psychology might be invoked to explain, but if I could bring that in, the reader would probably not be particularly interested in it.

There are some conspicuous exceptions to what I have just said about not beginning too young. Mademoiselle Lenglen was such an exception, and has remained an exception above other standards of brilliance ever since she began at the age of eleven, though popular legend puts her commencing age even earlier than that. Miss Betty Nuttall is another exception, but she is obviously very much stronger than most children of her age.

### **Early Training of Eye and Mind**

Children, I think, ought to begin early to play ball games, and especially badminton, which, though not exactly a ball game, produces the same effect in training the mind and eye to work together naturally and easily, unconsciously and automatically. A kind of natural confidence, which might

almost be called automatic precision, is an essential part of the equipment of every successful lawn tennis player. But even this most valuable weapon by itself is not enough. There must be "the fighting spirit," or "the winning temperament," whichever you like to call it, according to your point of view. To get that moral quality, the best brand of it, children should play games of all or any kinds, providing they involve activity and skill.

These views would, I know, be regarded as heresies by the French school of which Mlle. Lenglen is the most famous exponent. That most logical race believes in knowing what you want, and steering straight towards it without paying any attention to side issues or any other matters. In that way Mlle. Lenglen became world champion at a very early age. René Lacoste has also achieved championship honours in his 'teens. But still I believe that it is better not to concentrate entirely on lawn tennis in childhood. No first-class player can be completely machine-made. He or she must have it naturally; and when that is so, the making of a great player should begin at the age of thirteen or fourteen, not by a process of "cramming" which leads straight to staleness and even ultimately to nervous prostra-

tion, but by agreeable and intelligent practice and coaching, without too much tournament play.

### The True Spirit of the Game

One can easily have too much tournament play in these days. The state of mind, the lowering of vitality, which can be brought about in this way are utterly out of keeping with the true spirit of the game, and can darken the destiny of the most promising young player. Particularly, such a player should not go in too much or too seriously for handicap events, for having to give odds cramps one's style, to put it crudely but with a double truth, more than anything else. In tournament play it is most necessary for the beginner to avoid falling into the habit of playing for safety, always with restraint, the game that scores only off the opponent's errors, for a brilliant, world-beating type of game never was, and never will be, developed in this way.

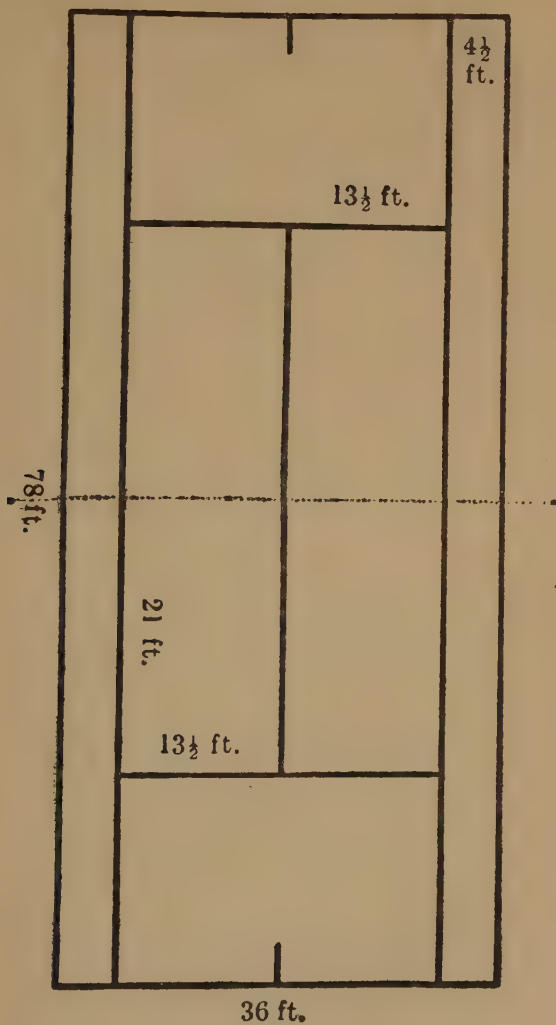
But, it may be urged, there are many, perhaps the great majority, whose ambitions are not so high. Even if that is so—and private, secret ambition is a curious thing—I still believe that far more good will be

got out of lawn tennis by those who avoid dropping into the safe, stonewall type of game, who do all they can to acquire free-hitting strokes and the easy, delightful style that goes with them.

### **Sport and the Business Element**

In this hurried world, in this kaleidoscopic age, things come upon us without our reckoning on their coming in advance, or offering any sort of reception except acceptance. Lawn tennis has got to its present stage somewhat in that way. It has crept into our national life, penetrating gradually and peacefully to all classes. And now people sometimes write indignantly to the papers, complaining of the inadequate number of public courts provided in the parks and elsewhere for the masses who desire to play lawn tennis. It is strange and odd. Carlyle would not have complained of the insufficiency of public courts without first marvelling for several pages at there being any at all. But it is characteristic of us to let things go of their own accord up to a certain point without realizing that anything is happening, and then suddenly to "sit up and take notice"—even to act.

# PLAN OF THE DOUBLES COURT







I believe that the point up to which things have gone of their own accord is rather a crucial one for the future of lawn tennis. I believe that there is a fear of the business element, the "getting and spending" mania, creeping in and spoiling the sport, as it seems to me to have done with Association Football. The presence of world-famous players and the prospect of big gate money should not necessarily spoil sport, but sometimes do so in fact.

### **A Touch of the Racket "Makes the Whole World Kin"**

But there is no doubt that the increasing popularity of lawn tennis gives to thousands of people a far better recreation than cards or billiards or the cinematograph can ever provide. The entry lists in open tournaments are, perhaps, getting too big for the good of the game as a sport, but they bring people together in a way and for a purpose against which it seems to me nothing can be said, so long as finance does not play too big a part in these events. They bring people together and they bring nations together. I have played in and watched many matches on the Riviera in which all four players

were of different nationality, and yet those concerned—the referee, the umpires, and the audiences—did not, I suppose, reflect that there was any special significance in such matches. Mlle. Lenglen is, I believe, more in the eyes of the world than any other Frenchwoman now that Sarah Bernhardt is dead. Tilden and Dempsey are probably better known to the people on this side of the Atlantic than any great American, however eminent. Reflect upon this and take it seriously for a moment. You may conclude that there is more hope in sport—and particularly lawn tennis—than in any number of international conferences between professional statesmen. But the lawn tennis world must be careful to avoid becoming professional.

But for lawn tennis I might never have seen the lights of Roquebrunne and Cap Martin shining across the Bay of Monaco from the terrace of Monte Carlo, or the skyscrapers of New York, for the matter of that. But there are other things, it may be urged, which can decorate one's life with equally fine, or finer, pictures. That may be. One takes what comes to hand, and when it makes hand and arm and body strong, one is happy about it.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES

**N**EARLY all books of instruction on games or other forms of sport give the impression that the particular games under consideration are not really difficult. Even books about how to perform conjuring tricks are like that, although it is the essence of a conjuring trick that it should appear difficult, not to say impossible.

#### **Success is Always Hard**

Failure to emphasize the difficulties appears to me to be a weakness in any book about a particular subject. There is no doubt a lurking fear that the reader will be so alarmed by the obstacles in his way that he will abandon the struggle almost before it is begun. But, so far as lawn tennis is concerned at any rate, it is best for the beginner to know, in so far as is possible, what he is likely to be up against. If he starts with

the impression that it is all really quite easy he is likely to be bitterly disillusioned later.

I want to avoid this particular pitfall; though its avoidance seems to be almost as difficult as success at lawn tennis itself.

Mr. Henry Ford, in his book about his life and work, has summed up the whole matter very well in four words, "success is always hard."

That which is not hard is not success. The individual who can only accomplish easy things will never set the Thames on fire, or otherwise make any deep impression upon the world.

If lawn tennis were even as easy as it looks great crowds would not flock to see it played, and the new Wimbledon would never have been built.

The way in which the best players make their strokes looks obvious to a casual observer; but it is not easy to do even obvious things consistently well, and the man who can is much to be envied. It is easy to play wrong notes on the piano, though the right ones are obvious.

### **Do not Judge by Appearances**

The brilliance of the greatest lawn tennis

## THE FOREHAND DRIVE



*Photo]*

HALF WAY THROUGH THE STROKE

*[Sport & General*

*Here the weight of the body is being transferred from the right to the left foot. Notice the straight right arm and how the eye is kept on the ball.*

## THE FOREHAND VOLLEY



Photo]

GETTING INTO POSITION

[Sport & General

*This is a most important feature, and one often sadly neglected. It is best to use short steps in moving about the court and to keep on the toes.*



players is obvious in more senses than one. The way they do it looks easy in more senses than one. Even when their strokes and foot-work are described and analysed by skilful writers with clear understanding of the subject, the statements and description of how it is done appear obvious.

The beginner, having watched great players and read some book on lawn tennis, must needs exclaim, "Why, of course, the faults to be avoided are obvious, and when you see the right way to do it, which looks, and evidently is, so easy, it is a wonder that anyone continues in bad ways. Come: success is within my grasp, I also am a painter."

But as yet no Correggio has appeared in the lawn tennis world, and I doubt if the game will ever see a parallel to his career as a painter—that is, assuming that he really made the exclamation popularly attributed to him and followed it up with immediate proof of his powers.

Mlle. Lenglen, Mr. W. T. Tilden and the rest have, on their own confession, been through laborious years of training. Mr. Tilden, in his book on the art of lawn tennis, declares that he was a duffer at the game when he first began. He also says that the game is played primarily with the mind;

but he gives an excellent chapter on the value of physical fitness, in which he states that "consistent and systematic training is essential to a tournament player."

Like most others who are greatly interested in the subject I agree with both statements ; and, if both are true, then we have at once a light on the difficulty of lawn tennis.

### **The Peculiar Difficulties of Watching the Ball**

Let us get down to details. Every book tells you to keep your eye on the ball ; and, for anyone who has reasonably good sight, surely this is not really difficult !

But there is much more in it than that. Anyone can watch the ball whilst it is on the way ; but the player who can watch it a few feet closer than the next man has a big advantage.

This needs a little explanation. It is a fact that most players cease to watch the ball after it has got to within a couple of yards of them. The mind assumes that enough has been seen of its flight for its coming position to be gauged sufficiently accurately for the stroke. But anyone who has played stump cricket, in which the ball has to be hit with a weapon only an inch or



so thick, knows that you have to see the ball as you hit it.

I do not know whether any professional teacher has ever made his pupils use a racket with a head much smaller than the normal size ; but it seems to me that some such idea would be excellent for teaching people how to watch the ball right up to the instant of impact. To do so is not easy. There is a tendency to have a last look at one's opponent just before hitting, so as to get an idea in advance of what the probable result of the stroke will be. By failing to watch the ball as you hit, you risk a result that will be nil ; and, however desirable it may be to know all about the opponent's movements, watching the ball comes first. You should be able to follow your opponent's movements and anticipate them without watching him all the time. You have not got to hit him ; on the contrary, you want to avoid him ; but you *have got* to hit the ball.

### **It is Fatal to Take the Line of Least Resistance**

This is a fundamental difficulty. Other things being equal, the player who watches the ball in its flight closest to his racket will

### 36 SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES

be most successful and make the fewest errors.

In lawn tennis points are gained in two ways, namely by errors on the opponent's part and by the outright winners that you make. In play of average class, according to Mr. Tilden, the proportions are 85 per cent. errors and the rest genuine winners. The proportion of winning strokes rises with the class of the play, so that the player who relies for his victories upon his adversaries' errors is more and more handicapped the further he gets, and can never come right to the front. But it is much easier in lawn tennis, as in other things, to play for safety. It is the line of least resistance.

To take the line of least resistance or to drift, is obviously fatal to success. It is easier to play a slow, safe game than to attack, and ground strokes are easier than volleys. Therefore, the best base-liners will always find attacking players to surpass them, not only because the attacking game is intrinsically better, but because the latter have realized that success is always hard.

Physical qualifications being equal it is the player with the most alert mind who wins. The stolid base-liner has usually made this type of game his own, because he lacks the enterprise to think out and execute plans of

attack. When two opponents of equal hitting powers face one another, the likely winner is the player who mixes up his game, varying length and pace in accordance with the symptoms displayed by his adversary. In other words it is the player who keeps thinking all the time who has the advantage; and the point of it all is that it is not by any means easy to keep on thinking hard all the while.

### **Do not Allow Yourself to be Dominated**

A winning shot is always possible from any position on the court; but a knowledge that you sometimes make a winner off a very difficult ball, such as a low and fast back-hander which has to be taken on the run, must not tempt you to try your luck when failure would mean the loss of the game, and of your self-confidence as well. Even in first-class lawn tennis, the percentage of points scored from errors is high and, so long as you do not abandon the idea of attack, you have at least an even chance of getting a point that you need off an error on your opponent's part. If, however, he succeeds in suppressing your attacking game entirely, bringing your play down to the level that

## 38 SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES

suits him, then your psychology is at fault and you deserve to lose.

You must not under any circumstances allow yourself to be dominated mentally, even if you are outplayed by an opponent whose game is definitely better than yours. With every occasion on which you are dominated mentally and morally by such a game, your chances diminish of rising to equal and surpass the superior player. You run the risk of forming a wrong habit of mind.

Think to yourself, "I can, though as yet I do not"; if you allow yourself to think, "I cannot," then no doubt the thought passes into your subconsciousness and grows there like a weed, until indeed you cannot, and never will. The right attitude of mind begins, "I could, if——"; the wrong one, "I cannot, because——"

### The Nature of Luck

Every player sometimes makes successful strokes that surprise him- or herself as well as the adversary. They are the natural outcome of the players' previous endeavours to hit the ball over the net and into the court, backed up perhaps, by his subconscious memories of how this difficult thing ought to

be accomplished. But however that may be, it is best to think that it is so, rather than to attribute them to luck. It is in the nature of luck to be unreliable; whereas, if you attribute such *coups* to the hidden recesses of your own capacity, you introduce the idea of being able to make them reliable and permanent features of your play.

It is best as far as possible to get rid of the idea of luck. If you make a backhand drive down the side line which goes out by an inch, the loss of the point which might so easily have been yours may not be such a disadvantage as at first appears, because your adversary will have been impressed by his narrow escape and by the fact that you *can* bring off such a shot. He will be liable to be nervous about it, and to watch that particular place carefully, perhaps to the neglect of other points at which you can attack him.

### Some Difficult Strokes

In general it is much more difficult to make a stroke at an angle than to send the ball straight back along the direction in which it came to you. Consider the movements of a billiard ball as it strikes a cushion. If you

could make your racket function like the cushion, placing it solidly behind the ball and making no stroke, but simply letting the ball bounce off, then you could judge the direction in which the ball will go pretty accurately. Moreover, the direction would not vary much with the pace of the ball as it came to you. In practice the angle at which you return the ball depends mainly upon your judgment of two things—the pace at which the ball comes to you and the force you put behind your racket. Both these things are difficult and require experience and skill to judge accurately.

Take an example: the ball is driven at you, low and fast, from far out to one side or the other of the opponent's court. You do not want to send it straight back, but to put it down the side line where your adversary may not have time to reach it. If you aim straight down the line and hit gently, the force of impact of the ball on your racket will make it go, not where you aim, but far out to the side. You have to judge accurately both this force of impact and the firmness of your own stroke, for the result to be a success. There is very little margin of error in such a shot, for you want to put the ball within a foot or so of the side line.



### The Difficulty of the Half-Volley

Every player of experience knows the difficulty of the half-volley, and avoids getting into positions in which this particular stroke has to be made. The art of successful half-volleying consists in making the best of a bad job ; and that best may sometimes be good enough to win a point, by neatly placing the ball ; but, in any case, it is *possible* to return the ball with a good length, and thus give yourself the chance of getting a sound volleying position.

A half-volley can never be a safe shot, except perhaps on a wood court with a perfect surface. The way in which the ball comes off the ground has to be pre-judged for a half-volley ; and, the bounce is never a certainty on grass, and not absolutely so, even on a good hard court, especially after a game has been in progress for some time during which the surface is bound to have been disturbed more or less.

### Taking a Shot on the Run

It is always more difficult to make a shot on the run than when you have had time to get into position for it, because you have



got to take into account the pace at which you are going and make allowance for it in the strength and direction of your stroke. When running forward the tendency is to hit too hard and too high, so that the ball goes out.

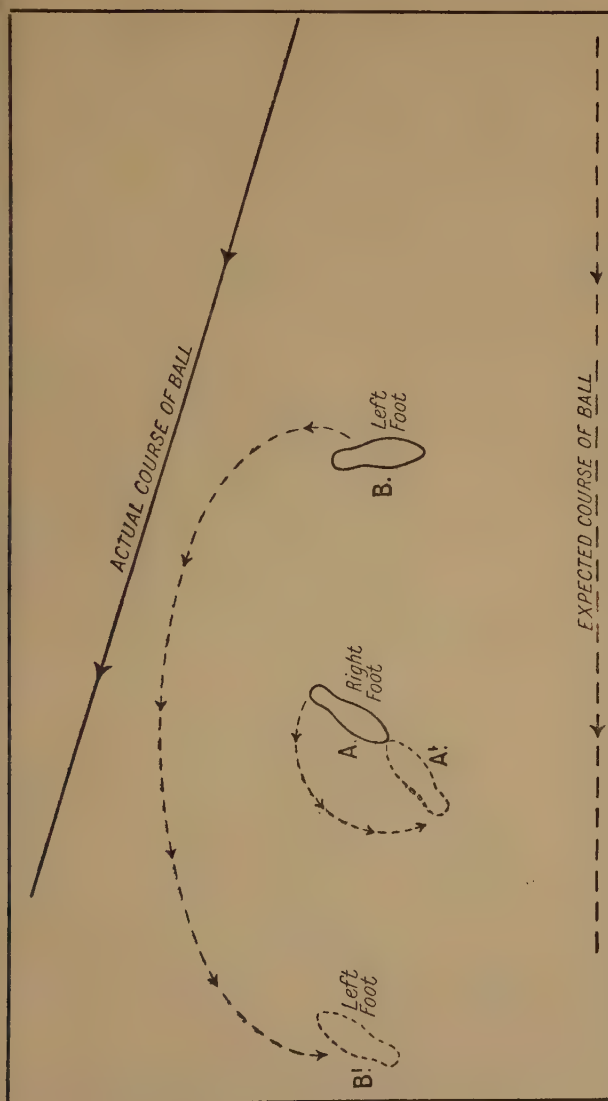
Courtcraft consists partly in being able to get into position in time for your stroke, and in doing all the running that may be necessary in between whiles.

### **Difficulties of Stance and Position**

I must face the fact that amongst beginners it is the members of my own sex who seem to find the greatest difficulty in the two vital matters of playing to the score and of keeping their proper position on the court. The first of these is elementary. Concentration and ordinary common sense are the only requisites for success; and there is really no excuse at all for forgetting or neglecting the score.

The beginner may reply that it does not seem to her (or him) to make any difference, and that she tries just as hard to win the point whatever the score may be. But that is just where the beginner is wrong, not, of course, in trying hard always to win the

## STANCE AND POSITION



Quickness to position oneself to take a stroke is an essential, and the above diagram shows how the player may quickly change his stance from that for the forehand to that for the backhand. His feet are as at A and B and he is expecting the ball to be returned along the dotted line on his righthand side. The ball, however, actually comes to his left. He, therefore, swings his left foot round to position B' and turns on the toe of his right foot, which assumes position A'. This is the stance for the backhand.



point, but in failing to recognize that there are many different ways of trying. It is here that common sense comes in.

On the subject of courtcraft I shall have much to say in a later chapter. It requires something more than common sense. There is room for genius. But before the subject of courtcraft can be studied effectively it is most necessary to understand that, not only must one master the art of *position* on the court, but also one must be in the right attitude to take the ball. It is difficult enough to acquire the foreknowledge to enable one to get into the right locality on the court; and even that is useless unless one can come into position with feet and body arranged correctly for a forehand, backhand or overhead stroke, as the particular case may be.

## CHAPTER III

### ABOUT EQUIPMENT

**I**N the arrangement of one's life the little things, the details, the furniture, count for a great deal—more than they ought to, according to many philosophically-minded people ; and it is the same in the case of lawn tennis.

Think of the difference between playing on a grass court that is patchy and uneven, marked with lines that are crooked and obscure, over a net that flaps wildly from crazy posts, whence every other ball is hit away into the damp obscurity of shrubberies from which it has to be retrieved with difficulty and torn garments, and, as an extreme example, on the beautifully kept centre court at Wimbledon.

I make this comparison merely to emphasize the importance of attending carefully to the mechanical details of the game—the court and its furnishings, the balls and, most important of all, the rackets.

### Varieties of Lawn Tennis

Many people who are as yet only casually interested in lawn tennis do not realize that there are now three games under the one title—the game on grass, which is the oldest, of course, and the games on hard courts and on wood. Except for the fact that a court with a wooden surface is invariably indoors, I think that it provides the best game of the three. Every bound is a true one, and you can make your own strokes in a free and easy style, knowing for certain that the ball will bounce as it should—that unforeseen accidents will not occur either to help or hinder your tactics. The game is also faster than on any other surface. Practice on wood, therefore, does one more good than any other form of play. If you have the right type of rubber-soled shoe for the particular wooden court on which you happen to be, the footing is perfect. The background is also very good, because the ball is easier to see against a stretch of green wall than anything else. Being able to see the ball so well helps one to acquire the automatic faculty of watching it properly under ordinary outdoor conditions which may be far less favourable.

Yet a really good grass court may be more enjoyable to play on, because it is out

in the open air. Perhaps that means more to me than to most people, because I have played and enjoyed so many different outdoor games all my life. The grass surface, moreover, is soft and pleasant for the feet, and also gives a perfect footing when dry. On the centre court at Wimbledon the ball bounces truly almost always. But, unfortunately, there are very few really good grass courts in England, and many bad ones which tend to make one get always too close to the ball for fear it should not rise enough to make it takable in proper style. The average club courts get very much knocked about, and wet weather makes it impossible to play one's game for the same reason—that the ball will not rise.

The hard court has the great advantages of being out of doors, and the high-bounding balls which it produces encourage players to develop a free swing and the fast, hard-hitting game that comes with it.

Progress is sure to be made in the construction of hard courts, and I think on the whole that they are the best to learn on. The future also seems to lie with them. They give the greatest amount of opportunity and facility for play. Thanks to hard courts, the game has known its greatest expansion.

The height of the net and posts, together



## THE FOREHAND DRIVE



[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.]

### FINISH OF STROKE

*Retrieving a low and difficult ball on the forehand side,*

## THE BACKHAND DRIVE



Photo

### FIRST POSITION

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B Sc.]

*The racket should be swung well back, and the weight of the body thrown on the left foot, which must be kept behind the right foot.*

with the dimensions and positions of the lines are given in the rules, pp. 231-3.

### How to Mark out the Court

First of all, a word about marking out the court. A good mechanical marker is essential; the method of painting the lines with a big brush being an unhappy makeshift at the best, though useful for repairing weak spots once the lines are marked. The lines should be marked along strings stretched tight over the positions that they are to occupy; and the essential rectangular form can be obtained by a method that is really very simple, although its mathematical origin may alarm some people. A triangle, the sides of which are in the proportion, 3, 4, and 5, is a right-angled triangle. Therefore, all you have to do is to measure off 15 feet along the line joining the two posts, take two other lengths of string 20 and 25 feet long respectively, and, stretching them from each end of your base between the two net posts, see where their ends meet. This point then determines one of the side lines, and from it all the others follow without further difficulty over right angles.

The diagram on page 51 makes this clear

Pieces of string of the lengths that I have mentioned are liable to stretch considerably, and for real accuracy, steel tapes such as surveyors use, must be employed for this job. Once it is done, however, permanent iron corner pieces must be fixed in the ground to mark the ends of the lines, so that remarking is easy, even when rain has washed away the white completely. These corner pieces are sold by all dealers in lawn tennis equipment, of which they are a most necessary part.

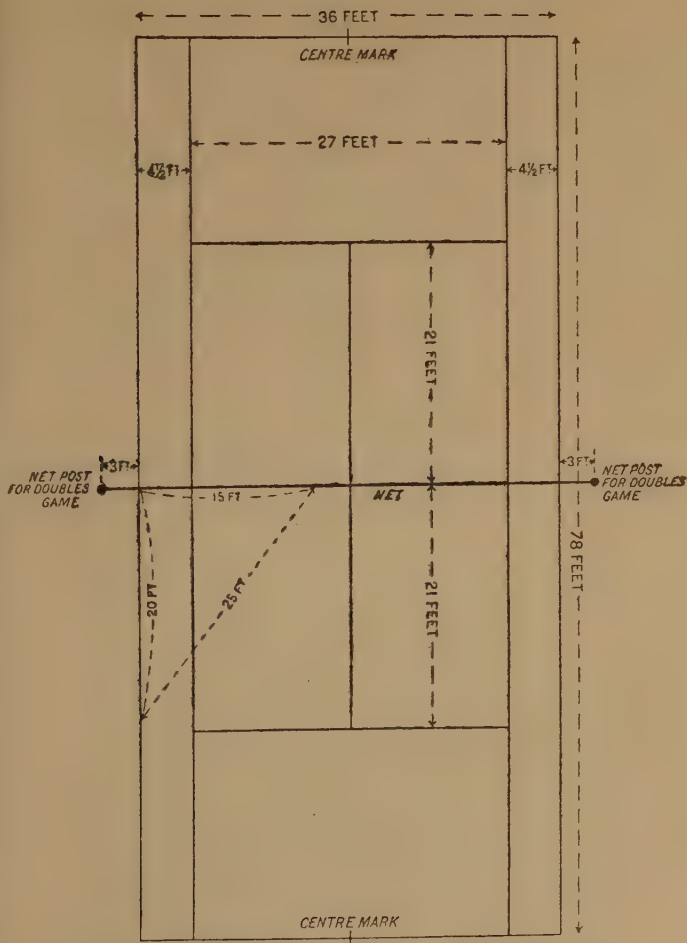
Archæologists tell us that the ancient Egyptians used this 3, 4, 5, rule of thumb method for determining right angles, long before Euclid proved it.

### Care of the Court

Everyone who has had any experience of it knows how difficult it is to keep a grass court in good order. It seems always to be either too wet or too dry.

The harm that is done by playing on a wet court is much more easily remedied than the wearing away of the grass which occurs in prolonged dry weather. When dents and heel marks are made by playing on sodden ground, the best remedy is to take a three-

# HOW TO MARK OUT THE COURT



The explanation of this diagram is given on pages 49-50. The dotted lines indicating the 15 foot and the 20 foot sides of the right-angled triangle are, of course, straight, not curved as necessarily shown in the diagram.



pronged garden fork, stick it in, and lever up the turf where the hole has been made. When, some time afterwards, the lawn is rolled, the dents disappear so completely that they might never have been made.

Mechanical sprinklers copiously applied, provide the only means of keeping grass courts in good condition in prolonged dry weather, from which it will be seen at once that they are not very cheap to run.

### About the Hard Court

Hard courts may already be divided into several categories, the kind of which the "en tout cas" is an example which requires a certain amount of regular brushing and watering; the granuloid surface, more recently introduced, which requires practically no attention whatever, and which, being porous, can be played on immediately after rain; and lastly, various cement or asphalt surfaces which, though less pleasant to the feet, are the cheapest to lay down. Excepting this last kind of surface, hard courts are considerably more expensive to lay down than grass; but, once made, their upkeep is much easier and cheaper, and their advantages, in this climate of ours, are very great.



### Stop Netting

Having got your court and your net, that is not all. Stop netting is a most important item, and one which is perhaps more often insufficiently provided than any other. Wire netting is more expensive than string netting, but it lasts so very much better and is so much more effective that it really appears to be false economy in the long run to use the string kind.

The two respects in which stop netting is often unsatisfactory are in being too near the lines and in not being high enough. A run back of fifteen feet is desirable behind the base-lines and a space of half that width at the sides. For international matches, it will be noted from the rules, these spaces are required to be respectively 21 feet and 12 feet; but the average garden lawn does not permit of such expansiveness.

### A Word about Rackets

The rules, it will be noted, whilst they specify the dimensions of court and balls, say nothing about rackets. It is not generally known that the normal kind of racket has been arrived at as a result of general

preference rather than by rule ; and there are, at the present time, a few players who, quite legitimately, use rackets of abnormal sizes and shapes.

The child who is just starting to play should begin with a racket that is as light as possible whilst still being of normal size and shape. It is, in my opinion, a mistake to begin with a specially small child's racket, because, when the beginner is promoted to a full-sized racket, the little that has been acquired has to be recaptured in a different way, and difficulties are introduced which would never have arisen if a normal racket had been used from the beginning.

### Weight of the Racket

Normal rackets are not yet usually made of less weight than 13 ounces ; and, if they were to be made lighter than this, I doubt if they would be any good, as the momentum of the racket counts for a good deal in striking the ball. For full-grown girls of average strength I recommend a 13½ ounce racket, and a handle that is not too thick for the hand to grip easily right round it. It is very fatiguing to play with a handle that is too thick, and is said to lead to that jumble of aches and pains called "tennis elbow."

## 56 THE WEIGHT OF THE RACKET

Masculine players vary a good deal in their opinions about the racket weights most suitable to them. Some prefer  $14\frac{1}{2}$  ounces, which is usually the heaviest rating sold in commercial quantities, whilst others favour 14 or  $13\frac{1}{2}$ . In general, the heavier rackets are preferred by base-liners, whilst the nimble volleyer favours a light racket.

The heavier the racket the more effort is required to move it quickly to meet an emergency, to change grip in a hurry, and to perform the movements for overhead strokes. The steel and aluminium rackets with metal strings that have been introduced comparatively recently have a slight advantage in this matter of sudden, rapid movement, since their passage through the air meets with less resistance than is the case with the ordinary kind. But, in my opinion, their disadvantages as yet outweigh this advantage, since their resilience is not yet as good and as uniform over the whole surface as that given by the best wood framed, gut-strung rackets. What the future may bring forth in the way of new inventions and designs it is impossible even to suggest ; but, in view of the present high price of good rackets, there would appear to be a fine commercial opportunity for something novel and efficient to be produced in really large quantities.

The fashion of some years ago for very thick handles has now passed away, and the modern preference is also for rackets that are strung as tightly as possible, though some little doubt was thrown on that theory by the American competitors at Wimbledon in 1924.

### Balance and "Feel" of the Racket

Apart from weight and stringing, the quality of balance is very important in a racket, and it is also somewhat elusive. You can test a racket roughly by balancing it on your finger. If it balances with the finger nearer the head than the handle end, then it is heavy in the head and badly balanced. This is a rough test, and the feel of the racket—what it feels like when you swing it—is another. It is a good thing to learn the kind of racket that suits you best by experience, and then to stick to it; but, unfortunately, the life of a racket in hard play is not usually very long, and restringing is not always satisfactory. Therefore, I repeat there is a fine commercial reward awaiting the firm that can produce sound, efficient rackets, that are really all absolutely alike for a given weight, in large quantities.

### How to Dress for Lawn Tennis

Clothing is always important, and a few remarks on the subject, as it affects my own sex, may not be out of place just here.

When deciding what to wear for lawn tennis it is well to remember that freedom of movement for the whole body is all important; but, apart from that, individual choice may be allowed a certain amount of play. Personally, I think that white always looks best on the court, with perhaps a coloured bandeau and belt. A tennis dress should always be as plain as possible, and made either of silk or cotton. The former, however, is not quite the best, as silk is apt to cling, and so impede one when running.

Shoes of the right kind are, of course, essential; though here again the choice must rest with the individual. I always wear a fairly light shoe made of canvas and lined inside with white to prevent the stocking becoming stained.

I also think that it is very important to have a warm, loose-fitting coat to put on immediately after play for protection against chills.

1

PART II

Instruction





## CHAPTER IV

### THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE

**I** BELIEVE that there is no game so delightful to watch as lawn tennis, and the enthusiasm of the vast crowds that gather at Wimbledon each year seems to bear me out. The people who go there and elsewhere to watch first-class play, do so to see the game and, in the majority of cases, to learn something, not to look at each other.

In this part of the book I shall try as best I can to set out full instructions about how to play lawn tennis ; but, first of all, I should like to give a little advice about how to watch it ; for the intelligent onlooker, seeking to improve his or her game, can learn quite as much that way as in any other.

#### The Value of Watching First-class Play

I feel that it would be waste of time for me to address the great multitude of keen, young players, if I were to lay down the

law. Youth, hopeful and confident, rebels against dogmatism in games, as in other matters ; and I believe that in the splendid sport of lawn tennis, more even than in other games, there can never be absolute right and wrong in methods of play and stroke production.

I will take the point of view of the keen beginner, splendidly young, who goes to watch at Wimbledon for the first time. There are real thrills in the play on the centre court at almost every match ; and it is these that take possession of the on-looker, who, after all, has come mainly for pleasure.

But, wishing to learn as much as possible, the beginner must not get carried away. Make up your mind what department of the game you particularly want to learn about, and look out for it. Is it backhanders, the forehand drive, overhead play, ground strokes, or that most vital foundation of good play, footwork ?

Make up your mind which of these you specially want to watch with a view to correcting your own mistakes and shortcomings, and think of that first and which competitor is likely to win the thrilling tussle afterwards. Try also to see why the winner wins and the loser loses ; then you will be more easily

able to see why you are liable to lose when you play. There are many different ways of winning or losing, and frequent watching of first-class play will give you a glimpse of the variety. But there is nothing like actual concrete examples for furnishing instruction—the real, alive first-class player appeals both to imagination and ambition; so I will take a few.

### **Some Fine Examples amongst the Great Players**

To watch Mlle. Lenglen is always educational for any player, however proficient. It is necessary to compare her style and methods with those of others who, seen by themselves, may have appeared to produce their strokes in the best possible way.

Mlle. Lenglen excels in every department of the game. Perhaps I should say a word here as to what is meant by “departments of the game.” It is a phrase conveniently and commonly used for such broad distinctions as that between ground strokes and overhead shots, or net play and long shots from the back of the court. Footwork, service and smashing may also be considered to be departments of the game.

You may have made up your mind to watch service, forehand drives, backhanders, low volleys, or any other kinds of strokes; and you will see that Mlle. Lenglen does them better than almost anyone else—I avoid the word, “perfection,” believing that nothing human is or ever can be perfect. Mlle. Lenglen’s play, however, illustrates better than that of any other woman, a matter of fundamental importance to all beginners, namely the vital necessity for an all-round game. I shall have something more to say about that in the next chapter; meanwhile, the young beginner is supposed to be keenly on the lookout for some particular stroke or strokes.

### Smashing and Overhead Play

Suppose it is smashing and overhead play: the beginner cannot get enough punch into these shots and is liable even to miss altogether: Then let us watch Monsieur J. Borotra, singles champion in 1924 at Wimbledon. No lob seems to be too high or too difficult for him to kill. It has been remarked by Mr. A. Wallis Myers, the well-known writer on lawn tennis, that, if the lawn tennis world were full of Borotras, lobbing would

## THE BACKHAND DRIVE



Photo]

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.

SECOND POSITION AND INSTANT OF IMPACT

*The racket should be held with the head of the racket above the wrist.*

## THE BACKHAND DRIVE



Photo]

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.

### THIRD POSITION

*The follow through after the ball has been struck. The racket has been carried well out to the right and across the body, and the whole weight of the body is on the right foot.*



be absolutely useless and would quickly become quite obsolete.

But how does he do it? If you can watch him from above, looking up into the air, you will see that he concentrates tremendously on the ball. You can almost see the lines of sight drawn to the falling ball; and when it falls near enough, it gets such a blow that you scarcely see it again.

There is, of course, no secret about it. Concentration, extreme agility, and strength, are, in order of importance, the factors that produce the results. But you can watch it more in detail: you can follow the movements of arm and feet, and see the kind of swing he takes, the way the body comes into play behind the arm, and especially how the feet move.

### **The Forehand Drive**

Now suppose that it is the forehand drive at its best our beginner has come to see, let us watch Mr. William Johnstone, the closest rival to Mr. W. T. Tilden, the American world champion. His wonderful forehand drive is the envy of all; but those who try to copy his style generally find that the results are, at first, most unsatisfactory.



Taking, as he does, a normal backhand grip for the forehand drive, he gives a big swing, imparting a terrific punch to the ball with any amount of top-spin. The usual result at a first attempt on the part of an imitator is to hit the ball ignominiously down into the net.

### Successful but Unorthodox

The fact of the matter is that Mr. Johnstone has evolved a style of his own, peculiarly characteristic of himself. He, therefore, furnishes our first example of a highly successful player some of whose methods may, if you like, be called unorthodox.

Miss Ryan is another example of a player of the first rank whose methods may also be called unorthodox. The beginner may watch her overhead play with great advantage ; but her ground strokes, in which she employs a chop drive almost always, are not likely to be imitated successfully. Without advising any beginner deliberately to pursue methods that are either called unorthodox or are unnatural to him, it should be noticed that Miss Ryan's play illustrates one advantage of having unusual strokes. Her shots bounce very differently from those of the average

player, and are consequently more difficult to take, until one is used to them, and always more difficult on damp ground. But her chop drive, in order to be successful, has to be timed more accurately even than an ordinary drive. Therefore, I do not advise imitation.

Every first-class player is good at back-handers; and almost every beginner finds them specially difficult. Any of the great players whom I have already cited may be watched with advantage by anyone seeking specially to correct a backhand weakness; and I shall have quite a lot to say on this subject later on.

### **Different Styles and Nationalities**

On the whole, I think that the leading French players show the highest all-round standard in footwork, and consequently the greatest freedom and facility in stroke production. English women players in the aggregate are ahead of the women of other countries, probably because of the very large share which exercise and outdoor sport takes in the education of English girls, and the universal popularity of dancing in our country. The cricket and football of British

schoolboys do not induce the delicacy and precision of foot movement that are necessary for first-class lawn tennis. That is, perhaps, the chief reason why the average Englishman is comparatively slow and ponderous on the court. He can run, but he does not run in quite the right way for winning at lawn tennis. But he can learn also, and, if he starts young enough, may again learn to beat the world.

There is something distinctive and, therefore, worth watching in the styles and methods of the leading representatives of all the principal lawn tennis playing nations. Japanese and Indian players, as Orientals, can teach us something in the matters of temperamental balance and complete mastery of self on the court. The Latin races, the French and Spanish at their best, are amazingly alert; whilst Americans and Australasians are, at present, more vigorous and aggressive than our best players.

### The Value of Concentration

There is, however, one lesson to be learned from all or any of the world's best players, namely, the value of concentration. It is the same, I suppose, in everything that one

attempts. In order to succeed one must concentrate and concentrate. There must be no loop-hole through which an ounce of one's available force can escape. First of all, for success, one's heart and mind and all the rest of one, whatever that may be, must be on the game and nowhere else. Just think for a moment what this means. Think of yourself on a tennis court, as you doubtless have been many times, but imagine that everything, except the court, the net, the balls, the rackets, and your opponent, is swept out of existence; then you will have an idea of what your mental attitude towards the game should be, if you are to make the most of your powers and have the best chance of winning.

But is it worth while? Is it good enough? you may ask, without realizing that your question suggests a compromise, suggests that it might be right to do the thing by halves. Needless to repeat the text "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do——" The things that one's hands find to do are either worth doing or best left undone. That is all that one really has to decide about, and I shall go on assuming that we have decided among ourselves that lawn tennis is worth while.

Concentration, then, is of primary import-

ance, and this idea leads us straight to the notion that it might be possible to develop a genius for the game by taking infinite pains. But that I do not believe. With all due deference to Carlyle's definition, another kind of genius is also required in the make-up of a really first-class lawn tennis player, the kind of genius that a sea-gull has for flying, about which it presumably takes no pains whatever.

Concentration, then, being of the importance it is, one of the chief things to remember is to watch the ball properly; and even this simple instruction is not really quite simple, as we shall see in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### FOOTWORK AND THE GROUND STROKES

**I** WILL take ground strokes before considering the technique of volleying. But, first of all it cannot be repeated too often or emphasized too much that the aspiring player must not rely on ground strokes alone. It is absolutely essential that an all-round game shall be acquired if any real success is to be achieved.

#### Vital Importance of an All-round Game

In some walks of life, doubtless it is best to concentrate upon what you know you can do, leaving alone the things that you are not good at ; but in lawn tennis this is not the case. A good forehand drive is a most valuable asset to any player ; but he or she will never get far without making the effort to achieve proficiency on the back-

hand side as well, and also in volleying and smashing.

I could name easily half a dozen young English women players who have admirable forehand drives and, in some cases, good backhand ground strokes, but who can never hope to rise to the top, because they have left the rest of their game undeveloped. They have not learnt to come up to the net and volley.

And the reason for that is this—one sees it happening constantly—a promising young player, with good, hard, accurate ground strokes, enters for tournaments: she finds that when she abandons her base-line game for volleying attacks at the net, she is passed, or lobbed, and defeated. Therefore, in order to win—always the primary object in tournament play—she returns to the back of the court and the strokes she knows she can do. She probably finds a good, active partner for mixed matches, to whom her accurate base-line game is a sound support: thus she gets no incentive whatever to learn the all-round game.

But the whole gamut of lawn tennis strokes cannot be mastered all at once. We must tackle each item separately, and we may as well begin with that which is most fundamental.



## THE FEET AND THE PART THEY MUST PLAY

Footwork is, in a sense, the basis on which all the rest of the game stands. In watching a good match you may start with your mind made up to observe the players' footwork closely, and then get so interested in an exciting contest that you forget all about it, and watch only the strokes and whether they are winners or losers, without being able to analyse the causes. If you are close enough, it is quite a good plan to try holding a card up before your eyes so as to screen off all except the feet of the player whom you are watching.

If you are observing a good exponent of footwork, you will then see that whilst he waits for the ball he is generally poised on the front part of his feet, with his heels off the ground; that when he runs he starts with short, quick steps, which increase in length as he goes, and that he sometimes makes a little skip to get into step, so that the proper foot may be in position when he comes to make the stroke. Having made his stroke, he always has his feet so arranged as to preserve his balance and at the same time to enable him to move in any direction without delay.

The player, of course, does not think of all these things every time that he runs. He has been through the mill, and the art of good footwork has become automatic by continual practice, natural aptitude, and general experience.

### Some Fine Examples

To watch Mlle. Lenglen in this way is a very fine lesson, for I believe that her footwork is the most perfect of any player's, man or woman, of our time. M. Borotra, Wimbledon champion in the men's singles in 1924, is ubiquitous on the court, and has cultivated the art of running backwards as fast as most people can proceed forwards. Tall people, such as M. Borotra, are generally credited with being most difficult to lob against; but this is by no means always the case, for height means weight, and that often causes comparative ungainliness—an inability to change direction quickly, whilst a small player can acquire a more cat-like agility. Many of the world's best players are below the average height. Mr. Johnstone, M. Cochet, M. Lacoste and Colonel Kingscote are a few outstanding examples, whilst among

the ladies Miss Ryan, who is by no means tall, is undoubtedly second to none in the effectiveness of her overhead strokes in the doubles game.

But great players such as these do not pause to reflect, whilst they are playing, about the rules of footwork and stroke production. They generally forget all about their feet, concentrating entirely on the ball and the opponent.

The enormous number of things which, according to some teachers, one must think of and watch, in order to make a successful stroke, furnishes excellent material for comic writers to exercise their humour upon. They like to picture the bewilderment of the hopeful novice who is trying seriously to learn to play well. I hope to avoid some of this confusion by stating the way in which things usually happen in actual play, as well as by enumerating rules and principles upon which they ought to happen.

Apart from stroke production—apart from the actual manipulation of the racket—the player's feet and eyes must work together, like the pistons and the igniting spark of a petrol engine, with a precision that is infallible and automatic. To get this precision, or something approximating to it, for it is good to have a high ideal, one must both watch

and play. One must watch, not to see who wins, but how it is done ; and play, not to beat one's opponent, but to practise, watching one's steps as in a dancing lesson, and thinking of the rules and how they affect one's own particular case.

This, be it noted, is almost the direct opposite of what one's attitude should be in tournament play, when all one's powers are concentrated wholly and solely upon winning the game.

But to attempt to follow all the rules that one has been told or has read in books is not always satisfactory, and is, in any case, not enough. In studying the subject by photographs and diagrams of stroke production, from lengthy and eloquent discourses about how to do it, as well as from watching first-class play, you should say to yourself : " How is all this going to benefit me and improve my own peculiar and imperfect style ? "

### Orthodoxy in Footwork

A certain degree of orthodoxy has been established in the matter of footwork, so far as ground strokes are concerned. The ordinary rules are that for a right-handed player the forehand drive should be made

with the left foot forward, the weight of the body coming on to it with the swing of the racket, the other foot coming forward with the follow-through. For the corresponding backhand stroke it is, of course, the right foot that should be advanced, and the weight of the body should swing forward on to it from the left foot. This sounds quite simple and straightforward, and it is easy to make these movements with a racket, and easy also to drive a ball over the net in the correct way—a ball that one bounces oneself. But very different conditions are liable to arise when the ball is driven at one by a skilful opponent from the other side of the net. However well or ill one's feet may be placed and moved, one quickly realizes that balance of the body, timing, and distance from the ball are all-important. If one gets too close to the ball and tries to make the stroke with a backward jerk of the body that brings its weight on to the heels, the chances are that the shot will be a total failure. Good footwork on the court consists more in agility and ready responsiveness on the part of one's feet than in any slavish following of the rules of orthodoxy.

Here inevitably the comparison with dancing suggests itself. The feet of a good dancer go of their own accord in time to the music.

The movements are unpremeditated, easy and natural, yet they are according to rule. Footwork at lawn tennis must be the same. There is no time to stop and think of the rules. One's feet must do the right thing of their own accord. They must be always ready, and for that it is, of course, fatal to stand planted on one's heels. One must always be ready to make a move in any direction whatever, and to make it as rapidly as lies within one's power. One is constantly in the position of a sprinter waiting for the start of a hundred yards race.

When running for a ball, one must endeavour to reach the position for making the stroke with the feet in their proper places for a backhand or a forehand, as the case may be ; and this again sounds quite simple, but the beginner will naturally object that it is obviously out of the question to measure the distance and count the footsteps to be taken. The answer is that one's natural agility, inherited, no doubt, from prehistoric arboreal ancestors, must do the measurement and count the steps for one with lightning automatic precision. One can guide, direct, and improve one's natural agility by concentration and practice. It is the common experience of beginners, and those who have given up play for any considerable time, that



they get too close to the ball to make a proper stroke ; but once this fault is realized, practice can cure it.

## THE FOREHAND DRIVE AND ITS GRIP

Only a few exceptional people find back-hand strokes easier than forehand ; but the very fact that the forehand is usually so much the easier of the two prevents a great many people from studying and analysing forehand strokes. Realizing that they can get the ball back over the net with a reasonable degree of certainty, the tendency is to leave it at that. However, no forehand drive is so good that it cannot be improved.

We have seen how the feet must be placed, and from that it follows that, for a right-handed player, the left shoulder must always be pointing towards the net in making a forehand drive. Beginners generally have difficulty in getting round into this position, especially when they have to run for the ball ; and that, of course, takes us back again to footwork ; but it is quite impossible to make a good forehand drive by facing the net, as a proper swing cannot then be made.

Some teachers lay great stress on the importance of swinging the body, so that

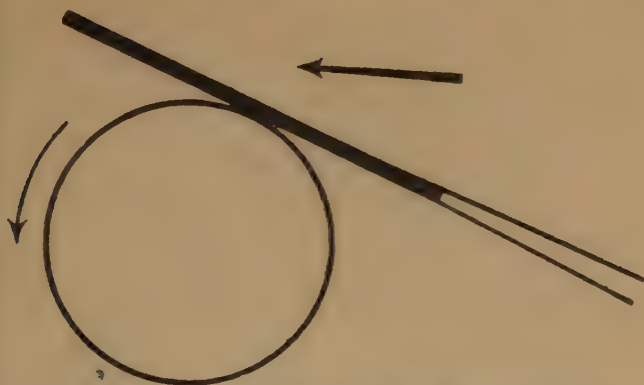


the arm, which should be straight out and not bent at the elbow, acts merely as a rigid connecting link between body and racket. This is quite a good idea for correcting the common tendency to make the stroke from the elbow rather than with a swing from the shoulder; but it is from the shoulder that the main effort and also much of the control of the stroke comes.

### Position of Arm and Racket

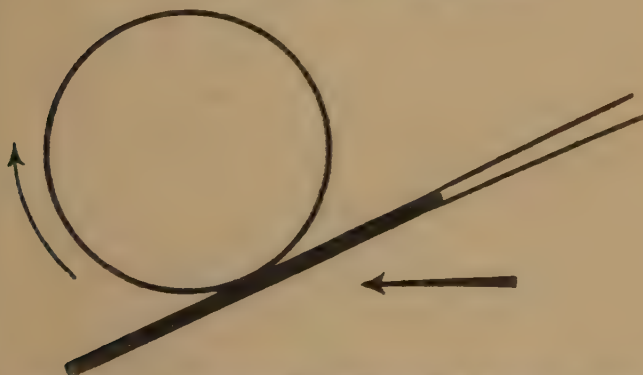
In addition to making the shot with a straight arm it is also of great importance that the head of the racket should not be below the wrist; and to get this position for a ball that does not rise it is necessary to bend down in making the stroke. In any case the ball should always be struck at or near the top of its bound. Those players, and there are a good many of them, who habitually impart cut to their strokes, can only do so by waiting for the ball until it is well past the top of its bound. In this way they hit late, giving their adversaries time to get into position, which more than nullifies any advantages that the cut stroke may have; this however, we will examine later on.

## HOW TO IMPART "TOP-SPIN"



The above diagram shows how "top-spin" is imparted to the ball. The racket is carried, with a forward movement, over the top of the ball, so as to make it rotate forward in the direction of the lighter arrow. The thicker arrow shows the course of the racket. (See page 83.)

## HOW TO "CUT" A BALL



This diagram illustrates the method used to impart "cut" to the ball. The racket is brought down so as to cut under, and at the same time, diagonally across the ball. The ball, therefore, revolves backwards and sideways, and after striking the ground will have its course diverted and impeded. (See page 92.)



### Top-spin in the Forehand Drive

A certain amount of top-spin should always be imparted to a forehand drive. This means that the ball, instead of being hit quite square, is struck with the head of the racket inclined more or less, so that the striking face points downwards towards the ground; but at the same time, the direction of movement of the racket face is upwards more or less, so that these two counteracting influences combine to send the ball not down on to the ground, but over the net with a spin that tends to make it dip and so stay in the court when it gets the other side.

I say "more or less," because the amount of top-spin that different players use varies very much. It takes an extremely strong wrist to impart the amount of spin that certain players get, and, in my opinion, no woman can do it. Monsieur J. Washer, the Belgian champion, is an example of a man who can get a phenomenal amount of top-spin by using his wrist at the instant of impact. I do not advise anyone to attempt that kind of stroke at any rate until the straightforward forehand drive has been thoroughly mastered, in which a modest amount of top-spin is imparted by the movement of the whole arm from the shoulder.

### The Forehand Grip

For the forehand drive I grip with the flat part of the racket handle against that part of the palm of the hand which forms the base of the thumb, about where, according to palmists, the line of life runs its course. The grip must be firm, but at the same time the wrist must be supple, though not loose. To keep a firm grip and a supple wrist at the same time is one of the many difficulties that have to be overcome.

### THE BACKHAND DRIVE AND ITS GRIP

The change of grip for a backhand stroke consists, in my case, in bringing the handle of the racket a little further round, so that the flat part comes more directly in contact with the base of the thumb, and the thumb itself I generally place along the racket handle to give additional support. Although the change is evidently a very small one when thus analysed, it makes all the difference between a weak shot, with little control of direction or elevation, and one that is made with confidence and placed with assurance. But I cannot emphasize too strongly that such a change of grip must be quite automatic and unconscious.

Most beginners avoid backhand strokes whenever they can do so without putting themselves at a disadvantage. One's wrist has more natural resistance against being bent backwards than against being bent forwards. If you lay your arms naturally and easily along the arms of an arm-chair, with the hands projecting over the ends, and relax entirely, your hands drop down ; but if you lay your arms so that the hands rest palms upwards, they do not drop down in the same way. Fatigue tends to make one's hands droop like this, and so also to make one shirk backhanders. (Those who have seen the well-known play "Bella Donna" will recollect that the doctor in the piece observed extreme lassitude and feebleness in the wrists of his patient, caused by slow poison.) But the part played by the wrist in making an ordinary backhand stroke is generally the opposite to its movement for the forehand, and so involves a muscular reaction against the wrist's natural weakness and tendency to bend forwards.

Some people try to get over these difficulties by quickly changing the racket to the other hand when a backhander is coming. There is nothing wrong in doing this. It looks awkward, probably because it is not the best method to adopt in the circum-

stances. Apart from the inevitable loss of time in changing hands, there is another reason why no first-class player ever does it. Truly ambidextrous individuals are extremely rare. The vast majority who are not thus favoured by Nature, being either right-handed or left-handed, do all that they have to do, including tennis strokes both fore- and backhand, better with the one hand than with the other. Weakness on the backhand side can be overcome by practice and perseverance.

Most players change their grip for a backhand stroke from their forehand one. I do so myself; but that should not necessarily influence my readers. Some teachers advise always keeping the same grip, and there are some prominent players who do not change.

### Why Backhand Strokes are Difficult

Beginners, and others also, who avoid backhand strokes generally do so because they find them more difficult to *time* correctly and to control in the matter of direction. One often sees a player make a wild attempt at a fast ball on the backhand side, with the result that it goes, not back into the court, but far out to the left side (in



the case of a right-handed player). The player has not succeeded in getting his racket squarely behind the ball; and, in actual fact, he has generally been much too late in getting into position for the stroke. Footwork is more often at fault in backhand strokes that are failures than in the case of forehanders.

It is always easier to hit a ball straight back in the direction along which it has come to you than to direct it at an angle. This applies both to forehand and backhand drives; but the difficulty is usually much greater on the backhand side. Consider a ball that comes fast on the backhand side into the corner of the court, and suppose that you want to hit it back down the lines on that side of the court. You have to judge its pace and then hit at such an angle that the rebound of the ball from your racket combined with the extra impact that you give it will produce the right direction. In other words, you have to aim more towards the middle of the court than you actually wish the ball to go, and the extent of this divergence depends, of course, upon the force and firmness with which you strike. The harder you hit the more nearly will the ball take the direction in which you strike. Therefore, in both fore- and backhand drives,

you should follow through with your racket in the direction of your aim, only allowing the racket to swing round at the end of the follow-through.

In both cases the racket should be swung well back in preparation for the stroke, the weight being then on the right foot for a forehand stroke and on the left for a backhand. As the ball is struck the weight should come forward on to the other foot, which takes it all as you follow through after the shot.

### Meeting the Unexpected

But all these movements have to be performed without thinking about them. Indeed, modern lawn tennis is such a fast game that practically every response on the part of the player has to be automatic. One must also have the power to respond automatically to the various *unexpected* demands that are made upon one's stroke production. For example, on the average grass court it is often impossible to tell, by careful watching of one's opponent's action, whether the ball that is coming to one is going to bounce up or keep low. One must be equally capable of dealing with either, whether on the back-

or forehand side, and slight modifications of grip are necessary for taking a high bounding ball as compared with a low one on the backhand side. A fast low ball on the backhand side is generally the most difficult to deal with, especially as regards the control of the direction of one's return.

### EYESIGHT AND ITS USE IN PLAY

Those who fail to make progress beyond a certain point often argue that having a good eye is the beginning and end of the whole matter, and that they cannot get any further because their eye is not good enough. Certainly one cannot make a stroke without seeing the ball that is to be hit; but merely seeing it is not enough. Anyone can do that who is not blind, and, strange though it may sound, having a good eye has not much to do with eyesight. Almost any eye that sees is good enough, providing that its owner uses it correctly. The time when it is most difficult to watch the ball is the instant at which it is struck. Anyone can easily verify this by trying actually to see the racket hit the ball. Most players are familiar with the difficulty of telling whether a ball that pitches close to a line is in or out when they are also trying to hit it. I

have often played a stroke, and realized immediately afterwards the reason why it was a failure—because I took my eye off the ball just at the last instant.

Having a good eye, therefore, consists more in the capacity for watching the ball than in having eyesight that is optically perfect. Quite a number of successful lawn-tennis players wear glasses, which means, of course, that their eyesight is far from being optically perfect.

The only time when one need not follow the ball is just before one's opponent is going to hit it. By watching your opponent's racket as it meets the ball you can get advance information of the greatest value about the direction in which the ball is likely to come. The necessity for watching the ball most carefully in making one's own stroke is due to the extreme importance of "timing." A minute fraction of a second in timing makes all the difference in the result of one's stroke. There is only one correct psychological instant for hitting the ball, and the eye alone can tell you when it arrives.

The eye must also tell one at what pace the ball that has to be returned is approaching; and it is of the utmost importance that this information should be correct, or, rather,

that a correct judgment should be formed about the pace of the approaching ball, so that one may be properly prepared for hitting it at the required angle and with the right amount of strength. It is the commonest thing for beginners, when they have to take fast balls, to hit them far out over the lines partly because they misjudge the speed and partly also because they do not know how to modify their strokes to meet balls of varying speeds.

Having a good eye, therefore, involves a great deal more than being able fairly easily to hit the ball with the middle of one's racket; it involves much judgment; and such judgments have to be made instantly, without any time for weighing the evidence. They come very near to being reflex actions.

### **Correct Timing and Quickness of Decision**

In making both forehand and backhand strokes, the ball should be hit at or before the top of its bound. A common tendency of beginners is to wait too long before striking, in an unconscious endeavour to get a better view of the ball and general grasp of the situation before making the stroke. This

tendency towards deliberation is particularly marked in the case of most British players, whose mentality generally favours caution and the avoidance of seemingly unnecessary risk. But by waiting you almost always sacrifice more than you can possibly gain. You give your adversary that vital extra instant which enables him to get into position and to prepare fully to counter your return ; also you sacrifice much possible efficiency in length and pace by striking the ball when it has passed the top of its flight and is dropping towards the ground.

Quickness of eye and speed of decision are necessary for hitting the ball at or before the top of its bound, and this becomes comparatively easy and natural after one has been playing for some time, when one has got one's eye in, as the popular phrase puts it.

## CONTROLLED STROKES

### The Cut Shot

Control must always be exercised in making any stroke ; but, by controlled strokes, I mean special strokes to meet particular circumstances. We have already noted that there are players who habitually employ cut



shots at all times ; and this I do not recommend ; but there are times when it is desirable to impart cut to the ball. The term is generally understood to mean back spin which is, of course, the opposite of top spin. The racket is inclined so as to face upwards and is moved downwards—the reverse of the procedure in imparting top spin. The ball, as it is struck and passes over the net, does not dip, but tends to skim along ; and when it bounces it does not rise nearly so much as a ball that is hit square or with top spin. Moreover, it is often much easier to control the direction by putting cut on the ball, especially in returning a ball from near the net, which, of course, brings us to the drop shot.

### **The Drop Shot**

A successful drop shot is by no means easy to do. It requires most accurate judgment. It must be played as gently as possible, so as only just to clear the net, and with as much cut as possible so that its bound will be reduced to a minimum, the object being to make it impossible for the opponent, who is some way back on his side, to get up in time to take it.

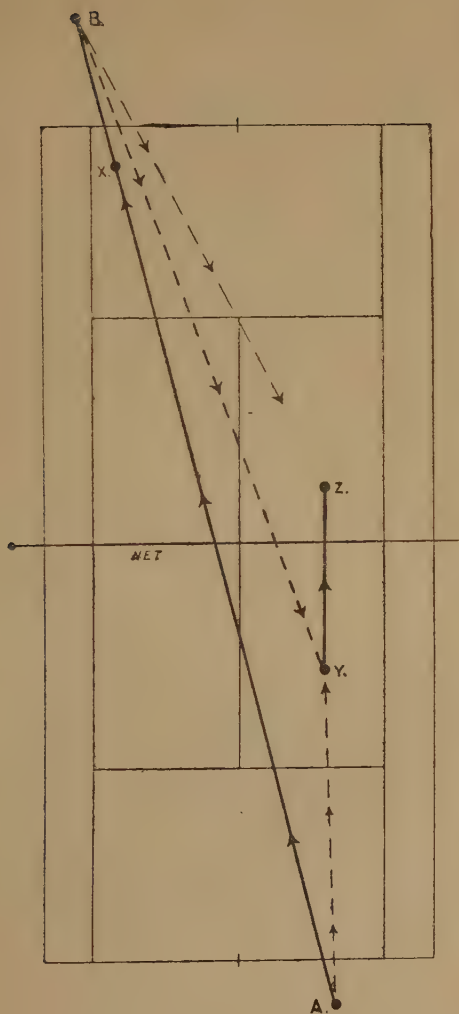


The idea still prevails in certain quarters that such a stroke is mean. But this idea is ridiculous so far as modern lawn tennis is concerned. It would be just as reasonable, or rather unreasonable, to say that it was mean to send such a hard drive that the opponent could not return it. The object is always to send a ball that the opponent cannot return, and which, at the same time, fulfils the rules of the game. It does not matter in the least whether it is a short or long ball, a hard or soft one, so long as it pitches within the prescribed limits of the court.

### Check Strokes

When one is forced up to the net, or when one comes up voluntarily in order to make a volleying attack, a ball often comes at one so hard and at such a height that, if hit squarely and fairly hard, the return would inevitably go out. A check stroke is then necessary. The ball must be allowed to hit one's racket and expend some of its impetus in doing so. The racket has to be drawn backwards just as the ball meets it. A very firm grip is necessary and nice judgment is required.

## THE "DROP" SHOT



The manoeuvre depicted above is called the "drop" shot. The player A gives a good length drive, pitching at X. B has to take this from well behind the baseline, and makes a weak return, pitching at Y. A has anticipated this, has come up, and is able to make the "drop" shot, which pitches just over the net at Z. B has not sufficient time to get up to the net to take it.



# THE BACKHAND DRIVE (The Wrong Way)



Photo]

[Topical

## THE FINISH OF THE STROKE

This photograph shows how the stroke should NOT be played, as at this stage the racket should be turned over the other way, having come over the top of the ball to keep the latter in the court. The action shown above would drive the ball high in the air and right out of the court. The head of the racket should be kept slightly above the wrist; not below it as here shown. The whole weight of the body is also wrongly on the left foot, instead of on the right foot entirely. (See next page.)

# THE BACKHAND DRIVE (The Right Way)



Photo]

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.

## FINISH OF STROKE

*The weight coming forward on the right foot, and the racket being carried well out to the right with a straight right arm.*

Only long experience can perfect these special strokes which also require much more wrist work than the straightforward forehand and backhand drives, and a description of them serves to emphasize the value of practice and the necessity for it—practice in which a serious effort should be made to use all the resources of intelligence. I will deal with this most important matter of practice much more fully in a later chapter.

Lawn tennis is an intelligent game. Only those who know very little of it can doubt this ; and the greatest amount of enjoyment is to be got out of it by playing with the mind as well as the body.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SERVICE

**A**FTER ground strokes, the beginner who is imbued with the laudable desire to acquire an all-round game naturally thinks of volleying and overhead play—the most impressive and spectacular part of the game to watch.

But first I will consider the most important of all overhead strokes—the service. I say overhead strokes advisedly, because the majority of woman players have now abandoned the old-fashioned underhand method, and have adopted the more masculine style of service overhead.

The best underhand service can never be so fast as a quite moderate overhead delivery, simply because, coming from so much lower down, if it has the speed it is bound to fly over the service line and be a fault. The best that a good underhand service can do is to break in a manner calculated to disconcert the receiver, and unless the server



can continually vary the spin on the ball, the opponent will soon get used to it and know how to deal with it more effectively than with an overhead delivery of quite ordinary pace.

A fairly fast overhead service, starting as it does from a height of six or seven feet above the ground, must necessarily bound higher than an underhand service: consequently the receiver is forced farther back in order to take it, and this in itself gives the server's side an advantage both in a single and still more in a double, because the farther back the receiver is, the more difficult it is for him to pass his opponents with the return.

### **All Girls should Learn to Serve Overhead**

All this is very simple reasoning. It is, indeed, only common sense with a little very elementary mechanics thrown in, and my only reason for approaching the subject of service in this way is to dispel the illusion, under which some people still labour, that it is best for a woman to serve underhand. All girls should learn to serve overhead, otherwise they will never be able to make the best of their powers at lawn tennis. But

an effective overhead service is a most difficult thing to learn if one has grown up and acquired a certain amount of proficiency with the underhand delivery, because the movements do not usually come easily and naturally to girls, as they do to boys, who have learned to throw stones at a very early age.

It is possible—indeed, it is easy—to point out the mistakes that people make with their overhead service, and one can always learn from mistakes; but it is difficult to give rules and instructions that are really helpful to beginners, especially woman players. A fast service can be achieved without great physical strength by giving the racket a full swing back and by bringing it over, not with the arm and shoulder alone, but with a certain amount of body swing as well. Too much body swing, however, leads to an unbalanced, uncontrolled stroke.

### **A Method of Serving as a Basis for Beginners**

More points are won or lost outright with the service than with any other stroke in lawn tennis. Therefore it is not only the most important overhead stroke in the game,

but for most players the most important stroke of all.

Without for a moment suggesting that my own particular method of serving is the best for every one, I will describe it briefly, as a basis from which to attack this most serious problem. I place my left foot a few inches behind the base-line and plant it firmly on the ground, so as to make quite sure of avoiding a foot-fault. As I throw the ball up, the weight of my body is about evenly divided between the two feet and rests rather on their forepart. As I strike the ball, my weight comes forward on to the left foot, the right foot leaves the ground, comes forward and makes a stride over the line after the ball has been struck. My friends tell me that for my first service, at any rate, I throw the ball rather higher than most people—about seven feet above my head—and I throw it as nearly as possible so that, if it were allowed to fall without being hit, it would drop about a foot in front of my right shoulder. I do not usually put spin on the ball, but hit it squarely, for in this way the greatest speed is obtained with the least expenditure of energy.

But to make a service in this way—that is, both fast and correct—greater accuracy is required in timing than when a certain amount



of spin or cut is imparted to the ball. It is a fact that in any lawn-tennis stroke the flight and direction of the ball are more easily controlled if it is given a certain amount of spin.

### How High to Throw the Ball

The act of throwing the ball up is very important, and it must become automatic—that is to say, one must always be able, without thinking about it, to throw the ball up to just the height and position that suit one best. But to make what is really an art become a habit it is well worth while to practise systematically by oneself. To throw the ball to a height of about five feet above one's head is correct for most services. If it is thrown higher, it necessarily comes down rather fast at the instant of impact, thus making a greater demand on the server's accuracy in timing; and if it is thrown lower than this, a free-swinging service cannot be made.

Some people, especially men, have plenty of facility in hitting an overhead ball at varying heights, and this tends to make them careless about the height to which they throw; but one cannot take too much trouble

to get the service just right. It is the only stroke in lawn tennis for which one is allowed, within limits, to take one's own dispositions independently of opponents, and so presents an unique opportunity for advantage. In fact, in the doubles game especially, the server's side is now generally recognized to have a distinct advantage, other things being about equal; but this advantage can be, and often is, sacrificed through carelessness on the server's part.

### **Action of the Arm and Path of the Racket**

On account of the difficulties which overhead service presents, especially to beginners of my own sex, the movements should be thought over carefully in detail and practised continually until they become quite easy and natural.

At the extremity of the swing back over one's head the elbow is bent and the head of the racket projects behind the left side of the body (in the case of a right-handed player). Since the object generally is to hit the ball as hard as possible the arm straightens out as the racket is brought to meet it, and, at the instant of impact the arm is straight and nearly vertical above one's head, being

inclined slightly forward, since the ball has to be directed downwards.

It is again a matter of elementary mechanics that most pace can be imparted to the ball if it is struck with the arm at full length. The arm and racket form a radius from the shoulder and are backed up by the forward thrust of the whole body.

After the ball has been struck the racket follows on with the forward movement of the body, and curves downwards and to the left with the swing from the shoulder, finally arriving at the position shown in the photograph of the finish of service, and by this time the server is well on the way to the net in a doubles game, or in a single also in which the tactics of following up service are adopted.

These tactics will be discussed in detail in the chapters on the doubles and singles games.

### The Rules of Service

Let us examine some possible and frequent forms of carelessness, in order to see how to get rid of them. First of all, the rules of service must be strictly followed. The server must stand behind the base-line and within



the limits of the centre line of the court and the far-side line produced in the case of the doubles game, or the near-side line in singles play. Many people forget or ignore this last rule, thinking that in singles they may serve from beyond the side of the singles court, and imagining also that they can get an advantage by so doing. But that is mere imagination, for in serving from beyond the side of the court they have farther to hit, the ball takes longer in its flight, and the receiver thus has more time in which to prepare for his return.

The above is only an instance of the lack of knowledge with regard to the Service Rule, and as so little attention is generally paid to the actual interpretation of this law, it seems to me that it is essential that the beginner should study the actual wording of the law very carefully. The rule reads as follows :

**RULE 6.**—Immediately before commencing to serve, the server shall stand with both feet at rest behind (i.e. farther from the net than) the base-line, and within the imaginary continuation of the centre-mark and side-line, and thereafter until the service has been delivered the server shall

- (a) Not change his position by walking or running.
- (b) Maintain contact with the ground.
- (c) Keep both his feet behind the base-line.

Under Rule 6 (b) both feet must not be off the ground at the same time.



Among more experienced players this law is, of course, well understood, although I am sorry to say many do not wholly conform to it. Beginners, however, are often very much at sea as to the actual meaning of the law, and I think a few simple explanations will not here be amiss.

First of all, the base-line means the back line of the court, and the player must keep both his feet behind this until he has actually struck the ball. The centre service-line runs down the centre of the court at right angles to and on either side of the net and connects with the line that runs parallel with the base-line and 21 feet from the net. This centre service-line divides the court, on both sides of the net, equally into two parts, namely the righthand and lefthand courts. It is not extended further from the net than the service-line, but a mark is made on the base-line where its imaginary continuation would cut it. This mark and the extreme side-lines of the court define the area from which the player may deliver his service. Thus, in serving from the righthand court he may not encroach to the left of the centre-mark nor to the right of the extreme righthand side-line of the court. He may, however, stand as far back from the base-line as he may wish. In the singles game the side-lines

bounding the service-courts determine the outer limits to the area in which the server may stand.

I have considered the area in which the server is allowed to stand and will now look at the space into which he must place his service. The centre service-line runs down the middle of the court at right angles to and bisects the service-line and the net, and with them and the service side-lines encloses two equal spaces on each side of the net. These are known as the right and left service-courts. The server must make the ball pitch within the limits of the service-court diagonally opposite to him, and his opponent, known as the receiver, may not return the service until the ball has actually dropped into the required area.

At the beginning of the game the server must serve from the righthand side of the court. He is allowed two services and it is a fault if the ball fails to pitch within the service-court ; if he miss the ball entirely, or if the ball served touch a permanent fixture (other than the net, strap or band) before it hits the ground.

If the server makes a bad throw-up, he may allow the ball to drop without attempting to strike it, and can start the service afresh.

If the receiver is not ready to take the service another service must be delivered, but

the receiver must give warning that he is not ready before the ball actually touches the ground. If, after giving this warning, he tries to take the service, and fails, the stroke is given against him, and once having given notice of not being ready he may not claim a fault because the ball does not drop into the correct court. Should the server deliver a service from the wrong side it is counted a fault, but his opponent may not claim this after the next service has been delivered. (See also page 244.)

### Foot-Faults

Foot-faults are quite common, even in first-class play, and in lawn tennis of the garden-party type they generally go unpunished, unless by chance a delivery from about a yard inside the court evokes a mild protest. The letter of the law implies—and it must be observed to the letter—that the server may neither run nor jump nor take a step when serving, and that one foot must be on the ground at the instant of impact, it does not matter which, and, of course, there is no legal objection to both feet being on the ground. But if the server keeps both feet down as he strikes, he loses some of his advantage, particularly in speed of movement towards the

net or elsewhere after his delivery. If, on the other hand, he lifts his right foot too quickly, he is liable to bring it over the line before the ball has left his racket, and then, whatever happens to the ball, the service is a foot-fault. It is, of course, very difficult even for the umpire to tell for certain whether such a service is a foot-fault. The movements are very rapid, and a linesman is really the only possible arbiter of these cases. Even in tournaments the majority of matches are played without linesmen, partly because it is usually difficult to get people to volunteer for the job ; but this should not make players careless about foot-faulting, for when a really important match comes—say, the final of an open tournament or a first appearance on the centre court at Wimbledon—to be foot-faulted, in addition to the general nervous tension of the situation, is about the most disconcerting thing that can possibly happen, and the player will have only himself to blame. The foot-fault rule has caused a good deal of heart-burning amongst lawn-tennis players, who sometimes think that they have been harshly treated, or that there is a doubt in the matter, because it is difficult for the human eye to follow the movements exactly, and to be quite sure about the moment of impact in relation to the offend-

ing foot. However, the only thing that can be fairly said about it is that when there is doubt, the umpire, and not the player, must be presumed to be right, and that the player's remedy for such trouble is obvious, namely, to take such precautions as to put the possibility of foot-faults out of the question.

### **Take Care and Do Not Waste Energy**

Carelessness over service can do more harm than in any other department of the game. The moral effect of a sound, consistent service is at least as great as its physical results, for it establishes a superiority and gives an impression of steadiness which it is extremely difficult for any adversary to counter. Therefore do not waste energy in slogging over a first service that is a fault nine times out of ten, and has to be followed by a second that is gentle in order to avoid losing the point outright. There is nothing more futile than this too common practice of slogging the first service. In the doubles game its bad effects are even greater than appears at first sight, for the server's partner is probably up at the net waiting and hoping for steady, strong deliveries from behind which will give

him a chance of intercepting and, under favourable conditions, killing the return. If these are not forthcoming, his position at the net is useless. And yet mediocre players never seem to think of such things, but go on slogging and hoping that somehow or other the ball will go right. It is essential to acquire a first service that is correct more often than not ; only then is it advisable to try and put on a lot of pace.

### Strategy in Service

The limits of the service court often seem somewhat small to the server, yet much can be done by judiciously placing the serve. Suppose you have against you a player who does not like backhanders. He or she will probably edge to the side of the court, giving the server an opportunity for a fast delivery far out and unreachable on the receiver's forehand side. The server, however, must have confidence in order to be able to do this, and confidence cannot be acquired by anyone who slogs first services that are nearly always faults. To deceive the receiver as to the direction in which the ball is coming, it is generally necessary to put on a certain amount of spin or cut, hitting the



ball with the face of the racket inclined at an angle. Suppose that the receiver is in the lefthand court, and has edged away towards the side-lines, being afraid of a hard ball on the backhand, you can then, without altering the general direction of your swing, by twisting the racket a little, send the ball straight down the middle of the court, where, if it is reached at all, it will probably be returned in such a way as to enable you or your partner to make a winner with the next stroke. If, on the other hand, the receiver has a very long reach, so that you cannot get your service right away from him, it is often sound policy to hit straight at him, as it is generally more difficult for a good player with a long reach to make a really fast return off a hard ball that comes straight at him than off one for which he has to reach out a little.

It is generally inexcusable to serve a double fault when the result is the loss of the game on that point; but if the score stands at 40-love or 40-15, it is sometimes permissible to take a risk with the second service. Circumstances may, and should, influence the service.

Another piece of strategy which can sometimes be practised with success is the deliberate serving of an unexpectedly soft ball on



## THE SERVICE



Photo]

BEGINNING OF SERVICE

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.

*The left foot should be planted firmly on the ground a few inches behind the base-line. The weight of the body is divided evenly on both feet as the ball is thrown up some five feet into the air and about one foot in front of the left shoulder. The weight should rest rather on the forepart of the feet.*

## THE SERVICE



*Photo]*

FINISH OF SERVICE

*[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.*

*.As I strike the ball my weight comes forward on my left foot. My right foot leaves the ground, comes forward and makes a stride over the line after the ball has been struck.*

the first service. If it is a fault, the receiver comes in closer than usual, expecting another soft one for the second. The server then has a very good chance of making a winner with a hard second service, but to do this he must be steady and sure of himself.

### Variety in Service

The onlooker at first-class lawn tennis is bound to conclude that there is almost infinite variety in service. Some people put on cut, others impart spin to the ball, whilst those who strike it squarely generally get the most pace on. A top spin, obtained by swinging the racket over the ball so that the strings draw upwards across it, is useful, particularly with the second service, in bringing it down within the limits of the service lines. Thus some people manage a second service that is not much less effective than their first. Mlle. Lenglen has great variety in her service, and M. Jean Washer, the Belgian champion, imparts a remarkable amount of top to his second delivery. But first of all I should advise the beginner to acquire a reliable service by striking the ball squarely, and to keep it as the basis for further developments, or to fall back on, should other methods prove unprofitable.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ART OF VOLLEYING AND THE SMASH

**I**N every game there is variety—the intensity rises and falls—and in lawn tennis there are moments when ordinary care, concentration, and common sense are insufficient to meet the demands upon one's play. Such moments occur when volleys and smashes have to be executed at or near the net; and they are moments of supreme exhilaration, taking one out of oneself, setting free such latent powers as one may possess, and making one act as though impelled by universal vital forces.

Beginners and hard-tryers who yet lack confidence may not be greatly encouraged by these remarks, but I must be honest. To say that good volleyers are born, not made, would be too sweeping. It appears to me to be necessary that they should be both born and made. By the first qualification I mean that they must have it in them to

volley and to smash ; and psychologists now tell us that we have all sorts of wonderful powers within us, the existence of which we should be far too modest to suspect. Therefore let the learners take heart. The faith that repeats without question or reasoning, " I can," is very much to be desired in the career of any lawn-tennis player, and it must not be faith according to the schoolboy's definition, which consists in believing things you know to be untrue. You never know what you can do at lawn tennis. Therefore it is perverse and foolish to say, " I cannot."

This is just by way of introducing the most difficult and exacting part of the game—the art of overhead play in general and smashing in particular.

Of all the men who play lawn tennis to-day, there are comparatively few who never attempt net play ; but with the women, unfortunately, the case is very different. Those who do not acquire an all-round game, who are content to stay always at the back of the court, not only can never reach the top of the tree, but also must miss much of the pleasure and exhilaration of the game. Therefore let all beginners of my own sex take warning, for it is almost impossible to change one's methods later on and to learn a really effective all-court game once

youth is past, as numerous examples testify.

I will try to describe the principles which seem to me to be most effective and helpful in making overhead strokes. The position and action which are most natural, easy, and successful for making a high overhead stroke from any part of the court are just the position and action which one uses for overhead service—yet another reason why all girls should learn to serve overhead. A fast service is really a smash from the back of the court, but one for the making of which the player is allowed to take his own time. Volleys and smashes almost always have to be made in a hurry, and you cannot hurry successfully over anything that you are quite unused to doing. Therefore, if you have already acquired an overhead service, you have gained half the battle, for you will not be flustered and taken aback by having suddenly to perform unfamiliar actions. Watch any woman player who serves underhand and seldom volleys when she is drawn up to the net by a short ball. If she gets a return that has to be taken overhead, the chances are that the ball will pass her before she can even succeed in raising her racket shoulder high. Practice and habit give one quickness in getting the racket into position overhead.





Photo]

THE SERVER'S PARTNER AT THE NET

*Stand about a yard and a half from the net—this distance again depends to a certain extent upon the capabilities of the player who is taking your partner's service.*

[P. G. Luck



## THE RETURN OF SERVICE



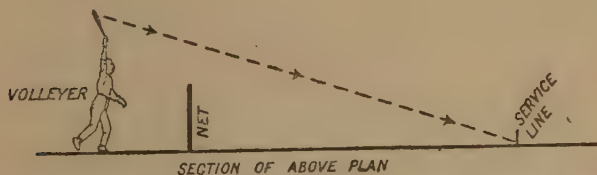
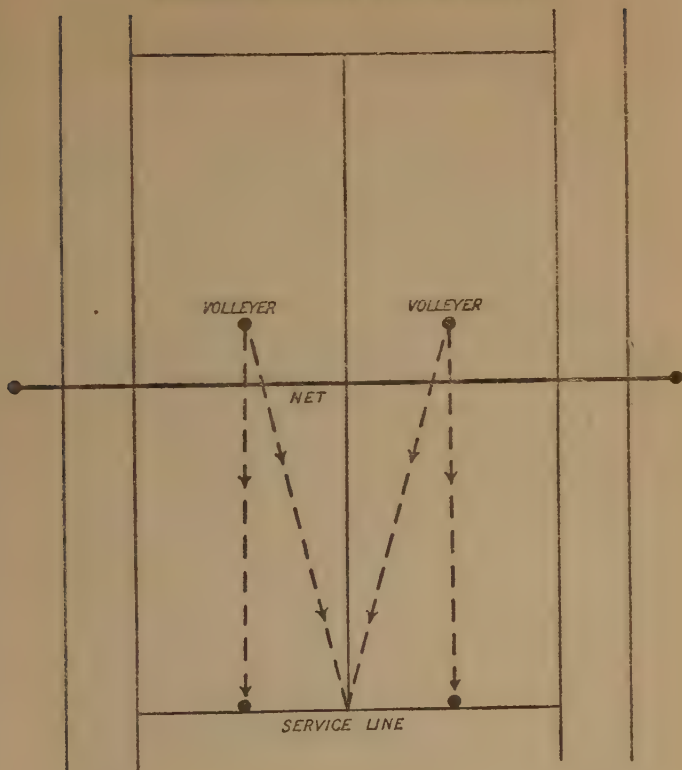
Photo]

J. G. Luce

RETURNING THE SERVICE WITH A BACKHAND CROSS-COURT DRIVE

*This photograph shows the finish of the stroke, which has to be a good, strong, full-blooded drive.*

## WHERE NOT TO STAND



SECTION OF ABOVE PLAN

This diagram shows how essential it is, when playing against efficient volleyers, to be either "right up" or "right back." Do not be caught on the service line, for a good volleyer will be able to send the ball down at your feet and have you at his mercy. Get up to within about two yards of the net, or back to just behind the base line, but if in the latter position, beware of being caught by a "drop-shot."



## Principles of Overhead Play

We will consider overhead strokes first of all, before passing to the general subject of volleying, since they follow naturally from a discussion of the service. All that I said in Chapter V about watching and concentrating upon the ball needs to be repeated with additional emphasis ; for it is more difficult to follow the flight of a ball that is high above one than one that is more or less on a level with the eye. The stars do not shine by day, and consequently our gaze is usually either level or directed slightly downwards. This fact does not appear at first sight to have anything to do with the matter, but actually it furnishes another example of the difficulty of doing unfamiliar things—of concentrating one's eyesight and attention in an unfamiliar direction.

There is also the brightness of the sky to be reckoned with. Even in this country the sky is always brighter than the ground : it is all a matter of comparison, and some people are more sensitive than others to changes of light. For my own part I do not find that an eyeshade is any help or advantage, except when there is a very strong general glare, such as prevails often on the Riviera.

### Timing Overhead Balls

The difficulty of following the flight of an overhead ball makes it harder to achieve accuracy in timing a smash than any other stroke. The most common tendency is to hit too late, so that the ball goes down into the net. If one is fully aware of this weakness, it can often be corrected by deliberately aiming a little way behind the back line; but this idea only applies to balls that are dropping from high in the air. A ball that comes at one fairly fast, a foot or so above one's head, is more liable to be hit out than into the net, because its impact is sufficient to force the racket back to an angle from which it will be returned too high. Such a stroke—the hitting of a fairly fast ball overhead—requires greater firmness of wrist and a stronger grip than any other. Overhead strokes in general put more work upon the wrist than any other shots. One can best appreciate this by watching any one who is really good at it—M. Borotra or Miss Ryan, for example.

There is ample photographic evidence in the papers that many players smash with both feet sometimes quite a long way off the ground; but to the beginner who does not know how to place the feet in making an

overhead stroke, who feels them awkward, I would say : " Make the stroke off your left foot, as in overhead service. If you have to jump to reach the ball, the left foot will be the last to leave the ground." These remarks, of course, apply only to right-handed players.

### Pace or Placing ?

The farther you swing your racket back, the more pace you are likely to get on the ball. But there are times when pace is not everything. Usually in a double, with two people opposite who should be capable of covering the court, pace is all-important—the smash should be a clean kill. In a single, on the other hand, direction is more important—the ball should be placed, not necessarily very hard, out of the opponent's reach.

As in other departments of the game, most first-class players have their own special peculiarities in making their overhead strokes. M. Borotra, who, on his day, is second to no one in the world in smashing, appears always somehow or other to get over the ball and to come down on top of it, like an earthquake or a thunderbolt, with a crash rather than with a full-arm swing. Probably a slow-motion cinema film would show much about

his smash that escapes the eye—that his racket goes farther back than one thinks. Mrs. Wightman, the famous American who, with Miss Helen Wills, won the ladies' doubles championship at Wimbledon in 1924, is another example of a most effective, though somewhat unorthodox, volleyer. She makes her overhead strokes with a movement that is almost the reverse of the swing usually employed, and it is not so much her swing as her wrist action that imparts pace and direction to the ball. She does not appear to swing back very far, and comes through quite straight, with an outward flick of the wrist just as she strikes. The result is a stroke of great power and accuracy, made without much apparent effort. The moral for beginners of Mrs. Wightman's overhead work at the net is that if you happen to have any special aptitude, any natural facility for making a particular kind of overhead stroke, then develop it to the utmost, never mind whether it is considered orthodox or not. If it is considered unorthodox, it will probably puzzle your opponents all the more to return your strokes: the main point is to be able to make the strokes with accuracy and certainty.

Mr. Lycett is a player whose overhead work every one should study. He can be



both severe and accurate from any part of the court, and he makes his strokes with movements that are easy to follow and look easy to emulate. He swings well back, and the resulting stroke is more of an overhead drive than a Borotra-like crash. Apart from what has already been said about watching and concentrating on the ball, strength and firmness of grip and wrist are the principal factors in making such strokes as these. A man with an exceptionally strong wrist can do deadly execution by placed volleying at the net with what appears to be little more than a flick of the racket. Mr. F. M. B. Fisher's net play furnishes a good example to watch in this connection.

But few ladies can rely on strength of wrist alone. To get the necessary severity in making an overhead stroke at or near the net, they have to give the racket a good swing back, and there are more ways than one of doing this. I have cited the ordinary overhead service action, because that is generally the easiest way, but Mlle. Lenglen has, in her great repertoire of strokes, a wonderful round-arm smash at the net which she uses with great effect in the doubles game, though seldom in singles. She makes the stroke off her left foot with exactly the same action as for the ordinary forehand

drive, only that her arm swings above her head instead of shoulder high. It is an extremely useful stroke and not really difficult to learn, but very few ladies acquire it.

Miss Ryan is consistently brilliant in her overhead work, extraordinarily quick, and at least as severe as any other lady. Although not tall, she is extremely difficult to lob over. A disadvantage in the matter of height can always be compensated, and often more than compensated, by extra agility. People who know little of lawn tennis, but see that overhead strokes are more likely to be outright winners than ordinary drives off the ground, generally jump to the conclusion that it must be a great advantage to be tall. But in actual practice the cat-like agility of a small player is often far more valuable than a few extra inches.

### Points in Good Overhead Play

To watch well-known players and study their methods is very valuable for all who wish to acquire or improve their overhead work ; and, did space permit, I might spend a lot of time in citing and describing the powers of the stars of the lawn-tennis world. In every case, however, the onlooker should

## THE OVERHEAD SMASH



*Photo]*

*[Topical*

### THE OVERHEAD SMASH ON THE FOREHAND

*Getting on top of the ball. The ball has just been struck, and the weight of the body is coming forward on to the left foot.*

## AN OVERHEAD STROKE



Photo]

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.

*An overhead stroke in which accurate placing rather than pace is the primary object. Always volley downwards and keep the ball as low as possible.*

notice that good footwork plays a part even more important than in the execution of ground strokes, and that the rules, in so far as any rules can be laid down, are the same.

It is often said that some players simply cannot smash, the idea being that something is definitely lacking that makes the performance of such strokes impossible to them. But I doubt if this is ever really the case. A good smash differs from other strokes in that it brings into play practically every muscle in the body ; it is an effort of one's whole being. Therefore a body that is supple and obedient to the will is necessary, as well as a strong arm and a good eye, and within it there must beat a heart that is strong and fearless. These qualities are within the reach of all. The good smasher must be an all-round athlete with a true sense of sport.

### Volleying

There is, of course, no hard and fast line between volleying in general and overhead play in particular. For example, the round-arm smash that Mlle. Lenglen executes so brilliantly is really something between an ordinary smash and a forehand volley. A forehand volley in the case of a right-handed

player should be made with the weight coming forward from the right foot on to the left, and with the left shoulder towards the net, exactly as in the forehand drive off the ground, whilst the reverse is, of course, the rule for a backhand volley.

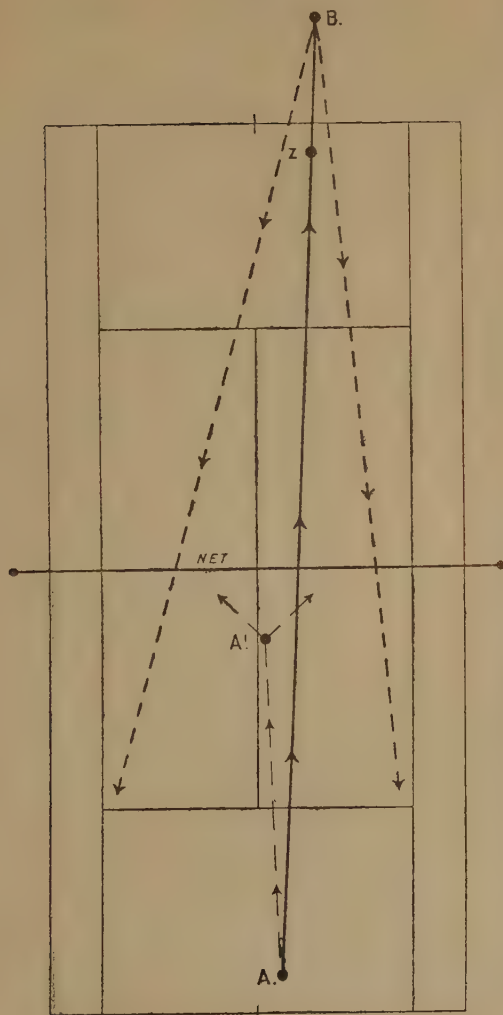
From the beginner's point of view the chief difference between volleys and ground strokes is that the volleys come faster with more impetus, so that there is a greater tendency for the racket to turn in the hand if it is not gripped sufficiently firmly and if the ball is not hit with the centre of the racket. The impact of the ball is so much more severe that, in accordance with the elementary mechanics that I have cited before, if it is not struck centrally, the racket gets a powerful twist, and the beginner says "My racket will keep turning in my hand."

Ground strokes are easier than volleys not only because a lot of the sting and energy are taken out of the ball by its impact with the ground, but also because there is generally so much more time to get into position.

### The Timing of Volleys

In the timing and hitting of a high overhead ball we have noticed the common tendency to hit too late and so too low ;

# CORRECT VOLLEYING POSITION (SINGLES)



I have here tried to show how the volleyer should manoeuvre for position. A makes a good length drive, pitching at Z and keeping B well to the back of the court. A should then run up to about A', and can from there dart to left or right and be able to intercept almost any return from B. If A does not get far enough up he will have too much space to cover on either side and will probably be passed.





[AN OVERHEAD STROKE



Photo]

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.

KILLING A HIGH BALL NEAR THE NET

*The racket is carried well back to ensure a full swing, and the eye is kept on the ball until after the moment of impact—essential in all strokes, and especially so in overhead work.*

*It will be noticed that both feet are off the ground, but this is not advisable.*

## THE USE OF THE LOB



Photo]

[P. G. Luck

THE LOB IS AN OCCASIONAL REPLY TO SERVICE

*Precision and accuracy are required. If successful, pitching near the back line, this stroke is often a winner and always a good attacking opening, but if it fails, the failure is generally irretrievable. This stroke should not be attempted off a very hard service.*

but with a volley that is about shoulder high the case is different. For such strokes the general rule is "volley downwards," keep your return as low and near the net as possible, so as either not to give your opponent a volley at all, or to give him a low one, which is the most difficult stroke to make, or, better still, to pitch the ball at his feet, so that he has to half-volley. In the doubles game the side that takes its volleys highest, that gets closest to the net in order to do so, is in the winning position. The players' twofold object is to get that position and keep it, and to prevent the opponents from getting it. The lob is, of course, the weapon *par excellence* with which to prevent your opponents from keeping the winning position. When all four players are near the net, those who succeed in keeping their returns low are generally the winners.

### Position for the Volley

Not only the footwork but also the general principles of stroke production are similar for volleys and for ground strokes. In hitting, the wrist should be slightly below the head of the racket. Therefore, for a low volley it is often necessary to bend down. It is equally important not to get too close

to the ball, so that one is "tucked up" and has to make the stroke off one's heels; and the tendency to get into such awkward positions is even greater in the case of volleys than with ground strokes, because one has less time in which to focus attention on the ball, and instinct prompts one to get close in order to see it better.

### The Low Volley

Low volleys, the ball being struck when it is only a foot or so from the ground, and lob volleys are strokes which require an altogether exceptional amount of accuracy and judgment to perform successfully, and both may be extremely valuable.

The chief difficulty in making a low volley successfully is to keep your return low. Since the ball is struck when it is only a foot or so from the ground, and it has to pass over the net, which is three feet high in the middle, it follows that it must be hit upwards: the idea is to hit it so that it just clears the net and rises as little as may be on the other side. Given a firm grip and a good eye, the nature of which I have tried to explain in Chapter V, everything depends upon the angle of the racket; and this is entirely a

matter of judgment—judgment of the direction and pace of the ball that is coming to you.

A very slight upward inclination of the face of the racket will send the ball high and probably out of the court if it is coming at you very fast, whilst a soft ball, of course, requires a certain amount of lifting. It follows from this statement that the low volleying of a very fast ball is easily the most difficult stroke in the whole of lawn tennis and can only be mastered by much practice combined with long experience. Many players find it particularly difficult to bend down low enough to get the correct position for a low volley—with the head of the racket not lower than the wrist; but there is no doubt whatever that this is the right way to make the stroke.

### The Lob Volley

In the doubles game, for example, when running in on one's service, the ball is generally returned at an angle across the court, in order to avoid the man at the net, so that the server who is running in has to take it fairly far out in the region of the side lines. Usually the most obvious way

to take it is to hit it back at an angle across the court, so as again to avoid the man at the net. Of course, a cunning shot may pass him down the side line; but it is not very often worth risking. A very useful alternative is a lob volley over the head of the man at the net. If successful it is most effective, because it reaches its destination much more quickly than a lob off the ground, so that the opponents have to break their formation and retire hastily in order to retrieve it. But we shall have to consider this stroke again when we come to the tactics of the doubles game.

The low volley, that is to say the stroke that is made from low down and so cannot be directed downwards, the stop volley or check shot, and the half-volley all come in the category of emergency strokes, in so far as any shot which gets the ball back can be considered an emergency stroke. There are emergencies all the time in first-class lawn tennis.

The game is full of the element of the unexpected, of endless variety and fluctuations, otherwise it would not be the great game that it is.



## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW TO PRACTISE

CAN practice be necessary in any pursuit that is followed primarily for pleasure? It depends upon the object in view—the kind of pleasure; and, in the case of lawn tennis, that object is not simple.

Pleasure? Yes, but in order to get as much of it as possible one must excel, and to excel one must practise. It is the same in everything. Some people may smile at the idea of practice, which involves hard work, in order to do well at a game, which is but a diversion, an escape even, from the serious business of life. But it is part of the business all the same.

First of all, in a practice-game, tactics should be adopted which appear to be the exact opposite of those most likely to be effective in a tournament match. By this I mean that, if your opponent has any particularly strong points, play on them, so as to give him every chance of putting his best strokes across to you. On your side, if you

have any particular weakness, let your adversary play on it, beg him to do so as much as possible, and never run round the ball, or otherwise avoid the difficulty. If for example you are weak at overhead strokes, as compared with ground shots from the back of the court, come up and volley, or try to, all the time. But if, in tournament play, you are accustomed to rely on agility at the net to win your games, then get to the back of the court and improve the pace and accuracy of those ground strokes which should be the foundation of an all-round game.

I take my stand on the superiority of the all-round game over any other method of play ; but it must not be thought that any particular asset, such as an exceptionally severe forehand drive, should be neglected in practice on that account. Your severe forehand drive is never so good that it cannot be further improved by practice ; only I would say, give more time and attention to your weakness than to your strength, and give it as nearly as possible in proportion to the values of these factors in your game.

Time is the crux of the whole matter, some one may here remark. It is limited anyway, and we cannot both practise enough and play enough to get all the improvement and all the pleasure we want at the same time.

### Practice versus Competition

The answer to that is, of course, that every one must make his own compromise for himself ; but that it is a matter of common observation that most lawn-tennis players would get better results if they went in more for non-competitive practice and less for competitive games. The competitive games, when they did come, would then be more enjoyable.

Then some one else says, " But is it the players who get high up in the lawn tennis world who really get most benefit from the game ? Do not the thousands of mediocre players really enjoy themselves more ? "

The answer can be had either direct from the super-players, or from the thousands of mediocrities, and in both cases it comes up out of the well of human nature. The player at the top of the tree could not endure the prospect of being mediocre again, and the ordinary player longs to climb up. Thus all who really love lawn tennis will find as much time for practice as possible.

Time, however, is not the only thing that has to be found. Suitable opponents, the more the better, are a vital necessity. Professionals are still somewhat scarce in this country, and many people cannot afford

their services ; but if that disability does not apply, there is nothing like practice with a competent professional who will modify and vary his game to meet your own particular case and who will always be able to beat you. But if the professional is out of the question, far more benefit will result from practice against some one who is stronger than you are than when it is the other way about.

This fact is fairly well known and it leads to a difficult situation in the matter of practice-games—every one wants to play against some one better than himself, no one is willing to take on a weaker opponent, consequently things arrive at a natural equilibrium by people of more or less equal strength generally playing against each other, with the result that neither gains as much as he might do.

### **Vary Your Opponent**

It is a great and common mistake to practise constantly against the same opponent. A state of stagnation is soon reached in which each knows and can meet all the points of the other's game. Rather than that, take on weak opponents and get what good you can out of it by trying new strokes, special strokes, anything that you would normally hesitate to risk in a tournament match.

Common and very familiar is the case in which a man constantly plays against the same woman, whom he can always defeat easily. It is first-rate practice for the lady, and she should improve steadily, but on the other hand the man may tend to deteriorate. Let him take the opportunity of teaching himself new strokes. If he is used to relying on a special, perhaps rather unorthodox, cut or chop stroke when he is out to beat his equals at the game, this is really a priceless opportunity for learning the more normal, so-called orthodox, fore- and backhand drives described and illustrated in this book. If, on the other hand, an orthodox style of play, or the rudiments of it at any rate, have already been acquired, let the man add to the scope of his game by practising cut, chop and drop shots—though these last may not always be tactful!

### **Theory put into Practice**

I speak of learning certain strokes, and there are those who say that they cannot be learned, taking their stand on the idea that an athlete's facile agility is not taught, but must be bred in the bone. Heredity—Environment—! We won't argue about such things, contenting ourselves with the observ-

ation that practice at lawn tennis is part of environment at any rate, and a good part of it; and that environment appears to be meant to be taken advantage of.

But can one really learn lawn-tennis strokes? It all depends on what you mean. An actor learns his part and makes himself word-perfect. In the matter of a lawn-tennis stroke you cannot even get that far. You may read and digest all that has been written about how best to make the particular stroke, only to realize your deficiencies the more poignantly. But, for the actor also, it is not the end of the matter when he is word-perfect. He brings what he has learnt on to the stage, and there the real business, the crucial test begins. You bring what you have learnt on to the tennis court, and there you try to put it into practice; and, as you practise, you learn more and more.

In the case which I have imagined—though little imagination is needed—of a man playing often against a woman whom he can always beat, the woman should encourage him to practise, so as to improve his game. The motives for such encouragement need not be altogether altruistic. She will get far more benefit from playing against a variety of strokes, than from combating her opponent's "pet" stroke, the exact nature of which she



gets to know too well by heart. This kind of practice *à deux* must be saved from monotony at all costs.

### Practising the Service

But what can the aspiring player do alone ? There is, of course, one stroke that can be practised alone *ad lib.* and with great benefit, namely, service. It is perhaps the most important of the overhead strokes and in many ways the most important stroke in the game : in the modern doubles game it certainly often takes that position. In due course we shall treat service from the standpoint of tactics in both the doubles and the singles game, but to do so now would be to try to run before we can walk. First of all the ball must be got over the net and into the prescribed limits of the service court ; secondly, pace must be acquired ; and thirdly ; direction (placing), spin, and break may be applied.

These three things can and should be practised alone. Take as many balls as you can collect, serve them from one end, observing carefully the results of your efforts and pondering the reasons for success or failure, then walk over and serve them back again,

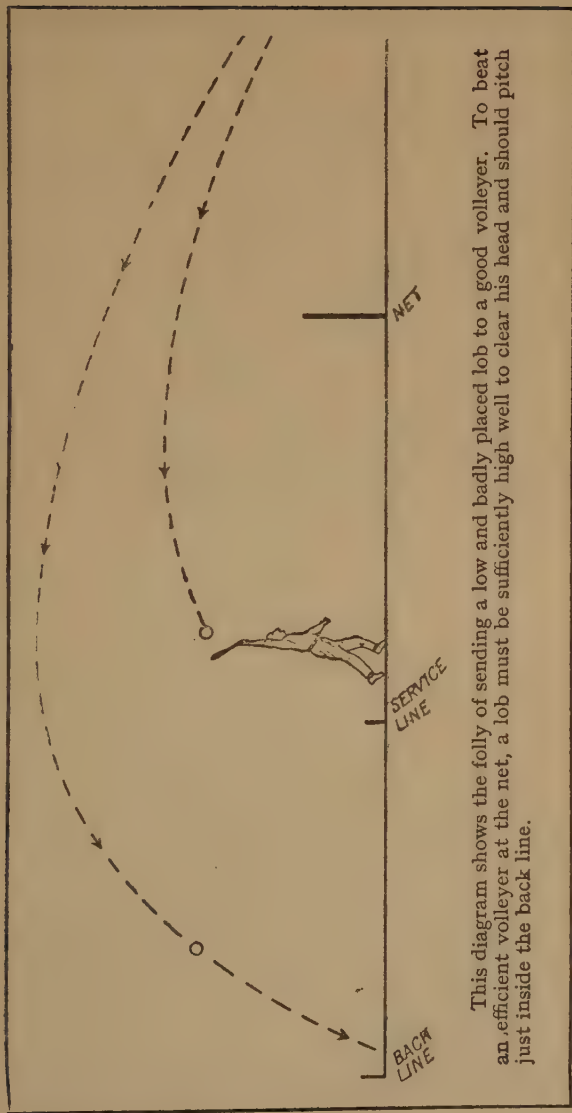


and so on, until you are tired. Even with the racket alone, before a glass in your room, you can do a great deal both towards giving yourself some fine exercise when getting up or going to bed and towards improving the freedom and force of your service. Exercise with an object is always better than the rather meaningless, muscle-developing movements prescribed by physical culture experts. I am presuming that before you carry out these recommendations you will have read about the movements involved in overhead service, in fact that you will know what you want.

### **Practice Brings Enthusiasm**

Aim first of all at acquiring accuracy in your service. This is fundamental. An uncertain, inaccurate service is an enormous handicap, as we shall see later on. The other things—pace, spin, break, and all the rest of the possible variations must come afterwards. Accuracy gives confidence, both to yourself and your partner when playing in doubles. If practice can give you that, it is worth while, even if it gives you nothing more. Practice has never yet made anyone perfect, simply because no one has so far been perfect at anything ; but the more you

## PLACING THE LOB



This diagram shows the folly of sending a low and badly placed lob to a good volleyer. To beat an efficient volleyer at the net, a lob must be sufficiently high well to clear his head and should pitch just inside the back line.



practise the more good will the practice do you. As in other things it is the first steps that are the most laborious. For those who are determined to advance the rate of progress increases as they go along ; and this is true whether it be service, backhanders, ground strokes, volleys, or any other particular department of the game that is being practised assiduously.

And the rate of progress is not the only thing that increases : more and more pleasure is got out of it as you improve. With enthusiasm one can always do things better than without it. Conversely, as one gets better at anything, the enthusiasm comes.

All this, however, relates to the individual as a unit, depending on himself alone. When we come to discuss the tactics of the doubles game we shall get a different point of view, namely that of close co-operation between two people. Practise for singles, if possible, against as many different people as you can find, but practise for doubles constantly with the partner with whom you decide to play on any particular occasion. Get to know your partner's capabilities and help him to understand yours ; practise partnership as well as lawn tennis. Even the best lawn tennis breaks down in doubles without good partnership.

### The Principles of Practice

We may summarise certain basic principles to be observed in practice at lawn tennis as follows :—

(1) If possible always practise under good conditions, that is to say on a court that is good and true and with balls that are all the same and not worn light with age.

(2) It is a mistake to do too much in one day. Four or five good hard sets are generally enough. If you play all day long, the last few sets are liable to do more harm than good, as you become stale and slack.

(3) Always play strictly by the rules when practising. Do not get into the habit of catching or stopping balls when they are going out. You may forget yourself in this way in a match and so throw away a point.

(4) For doubles, practise with your partner so that you learn to combine well. Arrange which shots each is going to take and so get all the talking over beforehand. In a match it is too late to formulate plans of campaign.

## THE HIGH FOREHAND VOLLEY



*Photo]*

**RUNNING TO TAKE A HIGH FOREHAND VOLLEY**

*[Sport & General*

*Notice the firm grip of the racket and the straight right arm. The angle of the racket is such as to direct the ball down into the court.*

## THE FOREHAND VOLLEY



*Photo]*

*[Alfieri*

*The right arm is kept straight and the grip firm. The weight should come forward from the right foot on to the left, and the left shoulder should be turned towards the net.*



## CHAPTER IX

### TECHNIQUE AND TACTICS OF THE DOUBLES GAME

THE whole subject of volleying is intimately bound up with what is summed up by the term, courtcraft, and especially the technique and tactics of the doubles game. But before passing on to that subject, the following broad facts about volleying should be borne in mind by beginners and others who seek to improve their game. More winning aces are made by volleying than in any other way ; but more points also are lost outright by mishitting than with other strokes. A volley should be either one thing or the other ; by that I mean that it should be either deliberately played short at a sharp angle or at the opponents' feet, or it should be a strong, full-blooded stroke of good length, likely to overwhelm the opposition. It pays to volley often ; but accuracy is of supreme importance—more important even than strength.

### **The Element of Partnership**

The difference between the doubles and the singles game is wider than would ever be suspected from a mere statement of the rules. The element of partnership and co-operation in the former is a factor that alters one's whole outlook. One is responsible not only to oneself but to the side, though it is only a side of two. One cannot and must not attempt to play quite the same game as one uses in singles. The special capabilities of each of the two players forming the "équipe" must dovetail into one another; and it is interesting to notice in passing that, whilst England has fallen behind America and France in the singles game, our position is far better where doubles play is concerned.

### **Importance of the Return of Service**

In the prevailing theory and practice of the doubles game the return of service is considered to be the most critical and important of all strokes. The struggle that goes on between the player returning the service and the opponents seeking to volley and kill his return, is something like the competition between offence and defence in warfare—between aeroplanes and anti-

aircraft devices, for example. Sometimes one is in the ascendant and sometimes the other.

Broadly speaking there are three methods to be adopted in returning the service: at an angle across the court, and as low as possible over the net; a lob over the head of the man at the net; and a passing stroke down the side lines. The first of these should be used at least four times for every one return attempted in the other ways.

A lob in reply to service is an attacking stroke, whereas from the back of the court, in the course of a rally, it is purely defensive. The return of service generally determines the subsequent course of the rally, and a successful lob can put the side that is receiving the service into a winning position; but an ill-judged lob is almost certain to lose the point, unless the volleying powers of the other side are very inferior. Moreover, if lobbing is resorted to very often for the return of service, the opponent at the net will be ready for it.

### Methods of Returning the Service

We are considering the matter at present from the point of view of the player who is taking the service. Later on we must put

ourselves in the position of the server's partner, waiting at the net, alert and ready for any sort of return that may come. Assuming, then, that the opponent at the net is alert and competent, it would obviously be risking disaster to attempt a series of lobs or passing shots down the side lines. The passing shot should be tried occasionally, to keep the man at the net in his place, and to puzzle him by introducing variety and the element of the unforeseen. This stroke, in order to be successful, must be driven low and hard, so that the opponent has not time to intercept it. Great accuracy is required in direction, for the margin within which one's aim may err is obviously very narrow. If it is brought off successfully, the confidence of the man at the net is likely to be shaken not a little.

Both of these attacking strokes, the passing shot down the side lines and the lob in reply to service, must be made by taking the ball at, or even before, the top of its bound. If you wait too long, you lose practically all chance of success, for the opponents then have plenty of time in which to see what you are going to do and prepare to meet it. Especially in the case of lobbing the return of service is it desirable to stand in as close as possible. A lob is, therefore, more often

a useful reply to a second service than to the more severe first delivery, for the reception of which it is usually unsafe to stand close in. A passing shot, on the other hand, may sometimes be made most effectively off a service that has a good length, pitches near the corner of the service court, and bounds far out over the side lines. Off such a service it may be difficult to pass the man at the net with an orthodox drive across the court; yet such a stroke is the natural one to make, for it is always easier to hit a ball back nearly along the line of its arrival than to divert it to a different direction. It is worth while to consider this first and most important reply to the service in some detail.

### Varying the Return of Service

Greater accuracy is required in making this stroke than for any other. It must be hit as low as possible across the net, so as to make things difficult for the volleyers on the other side. Indeed, in first-class play, a surprisingly large number of services are returned into the net. The receiver realizes that the point is as good as lost if he lifts his return too much. He, therefore, takes his risk in the opposite direction. The stroke

must not only be kept as low as possible, but must also be made quickly, being taken at the top of the bound or while the ball is still on the rise. I do not mean that the return of service across the court must necessarily and always be as hard hit as possible. It is very remarkable that the great majority of players seem to think that their one chance of success in returning the service in a double lies in hard hitting. Very often a stroke that is comparatively gentle and so pitches short, at or near the feet of the incoming volleyer, is far more likely to win the rally than a straightforward drive which he gets shoulder high and can hit down. A low, soft return, on to the feet of the server who is running in to volley, is extremely difficult for him to deal with. If he is obliged to half-volley, he will be lucky if he does not send a ball that can be killed by his opponents. If he gets far enough to volley, it is inevitably a low volley that he has to make, so that, unless he can produce a very well-judged volley lob, he is again liable to deliver himself into his opponents' hands. But at the same time it is obviously more difficult to pass the man at the net with a slow, soft stroke than with a firm, full-blooded drive, because he may have time to get across and kill the gentle return



designed to baffle his partner. Once again then we see the soundness of varying the return of service.

“But it is all very well,” the beginner may say, “to tell one what to do in this situation or that. When it comes to the point, things never turn out as expected, the ball has to be returned somehow or other, and there is no time to think out a plan of campaign.”

The reply is, that the best generals do not evolve their plans of campaign whilst the battle is raging. Picture to yourself as many different situations as you can think of in the doubles game, and then try to see yourself making the correct stroke in the best possible way, avoiding, or otherwise baffling, your opponents and winning the point. This is an innocent and pleasing amusement, and it helps also, even though your vision of yourself, doing it as it should be done, is shattered at first, when it comes to the real thing on the tennis court.

### **The Return of Service Summarized**

Summing up the points that I have raised in connection with the return of service, we have :—



(1) Across the court, avoiding the opponent at the net ; a low drive, accurately placed, the pace of which should be varied from time to time in an endeavour to baffle the tactics of the server if, as is generally the case, he is running in to volley.

(2) A drive, hard and low, over the centre of the net, designed to pass between the opponents. This is really a modification of number (1) ; but even greater precision is required.

(3) A lob over the head of the opponent at the net (the server's partner). Again, precision and accuracy are required. If successful, pitching near the back line, this stroke is often a winner and always a good attacking opening ; but if it fails, the failure is generally irretrievable. This stroke should not be attempted off a very hard service.

(4) A passing shot down the side lines. This is a surprise stroke which can be made from time to time when the opponent at the net shows signs of edging too far into the middle of the court. To succeed it must be quick, hard and accurate.

Numbers (1) or (2) should be used at least four times as often as (3) and (4).

### Position of the Server's Partner at the Net

We must now put ourselves in the position of the serving side, and especially of the server's partner, whom, in the first place, we will consider to be boldly standing at the net.

Many women will not play up at the net when their partner is serving. They lack confidence, considering that they are not sufficiently quick and competent to intercept the return, even if it comes well within their reach. A partner who does not play at the net puts the serving side at a great disadvantage; for, obviously, the server has little chance of making an effective volley by running in when the opponent who is taking the service has the whole court in which to pass him. The mere presence of a player at the net, even though she be an incompetent volleyer, is generally sufficient to narrow down the scope of the return. It may be a little dangerous for the lady at the net, but it is certainly also risky for the receiver of the service deliberately to aim at the opponent who is up. There is always the chance of a fluke return off the wood, which is almost certain to be a winner. Moreover, apart from the risk, it is a somewhat cold-blooded

act to aim deliberately at a weak player at the net ; and most people, in spite of what we read in the daily papers, are not murderous in their intentions.

Therefore, beginners—girls especially—should pluck up their courage and make a start at net play, as a support to their partner's service, unless the server himself wants to adopt other tactics. If he has a very strong service he may consider that the safety of his lady partner standing back is preferable to the uncertainty of her position at the net. A really hard service always has a chance of winning the point outright, and, should it be returned effectively, the serving side can adopt defensive tactics until another chance of taking the offensive occurs. This method of play, however, can never be quite so effective as the other. Observers of first-class lawn tennis will have noticed that the rallies in the doubles game are generally short, whereas in such singles as those in which both players adopt the base-line game, they are often very long. When four good players are opposed to one another, one side or the other quickly gets the winning position and takes advantage of it. Therefore I strongly advise all girls who are beginners, to persevere even in the face of discouragement and disappointment, and to learn to

play right up at the net in mixed doubles.

## Where and How to Stand

The utmost demands are made upon one's powers of observation and response at the net in the doubles game, and I can only set down a few general principles and hints as to how best to make use of them. Stand about a yard and a half from the net—this distance again depends to a certain extent upon the capabilities of the player who is taking your partner's service. Bend slightly forward and hold your racket with the forehand grip and the head resting lightly on the fingers of the other hand. I find it easier to change from forehand to backhand grip than the other way about; also, in an emergency it is possible to make a backhand stroke with a forehand grip better than conversely hitting the ball downwards. We have previously noticed that some well-known players find it best not to change their grip for backhand strokes.

## The Importance of Alertness

At the net you must be prepared to meet and counter any of the four returns of service

that I have already summarized, and many other minor variants besides. You must, therefore, watch your opponent's actions as he strikes with the closest attention and be prepared to move with the utmost possible speed ; so that it goes without saying that you must be on your toes. It is extremely disconcerting for a player at the net to assume that a cross-court return is coming, to prepare to meet it, and then to be passed down the side lines. But this can only happen through a mistaken prejudgment of the opponent's intentions. It does not pay to get on the move until observation has shown beyond doubt what the receiver of service is going to do with it, and then there must be no delay or hesitation. Hesitation and lack of confidence are responsible for failure in net play more often than anything else.

To intercept an attempted passing shot down the side lines, you have to make a dive to the right or the left according to the court in which you are at the time. In the left court, holding the racket as I have suggested, you already have it in the required position, except for the slight change that has to be made in the grip to correct for a backhand volley. In the right court the racket has to be swung out to your right, but you already have the required grip, and

a forehand volley is easier for most people than a backhand.

### Placing and Varying the Service

If the server places his service near the centre line, instead of out towards the side lines, then it is much more difficult for the striker to make a passing shot down the side lines, and it is unlikely that he will attempt it. Some first-class players consider that the service in doubles should always be directed towards the centre of the court, believing that less scope for the return is given in this way, and that it is more difficult to make an effective cross-court return also. The simple diagram, however, would appear to contradict this theory ; for, assuming that the man at the net covers his ground effectively up to the centre line, the receiver of service has the whole shaded area to hit into from position (1), whereas from position (2) he has only the heavily shaded part to aim at if he is to avoid the opponent who is up.

For my own part I believe that the service should be varied, and that it is wrong to base one's game on a rigid theory such as the foregoing. Particularly from the left-hand court I have found it an advantage to



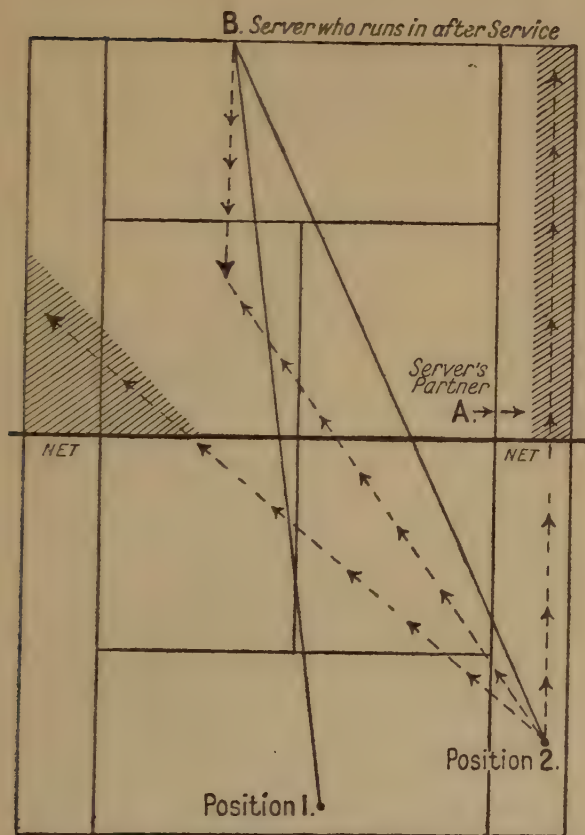
serve on the receiver's backhand, because most people are less well able to hook a ball across the court from the back- than from the forehand side, and also are less accurate in making passing shots down the side lines. There are, of course, exceptions ; and when one is up against them different tactics have to be adopted.

### After the First Three Strokes

I have so far discussed only the first three strokes of a rally in the doubles game ; and after this opening gambit has been played anything may happen. All four players may be up at the net, or one or both of one side or the other may be driven to the back of the court. When all four players hold their ground at the net the most exciting tussle ensues, and it is generally short and swift. There are two principles that can here be laid down for guidance : the side that gets closest to the net and so can hit most directly downwards has the advantage, and it is generally best to volley down the middle of the court. Active opponents can between them cover the side lines ; but close understanding of each other's play and excellent judgment are required to counter a volleying



# WHERE TO PLACE THE SERVICE



A diagram in contradiction of the theory that the service in Doubles should always be directed towards the centre of the court. (See also page 157.)



## THE HIGH BACKHAND VOLLEY



[Photo]

[Sport & General

### PLACING THE BALL ACROSS THE COURT

*By getting close up to the net and by "volleying downwards," the expert volleyer will pitch the ball at his opponent's feet, making it extremely difficult for him to take it. Keep your volleys as low as possible.*

## THE HIGH BACKHAND VOLLEY



Photo].

A HIGH BACKHAND VOLLEY TAKEN ON THE RUN

[Topical

*Volleying is more difficult than the taking of ground strokes, for the ball comes faster and harder. The volleyer has less time to position himself, and, unless the ball strikes the racket dead central, will have the racket turned in his hand if his grip is not firm.*

attack down the centre line. One must know what balls to go for and which to leave to one's partner's racket ; and hesitation is fatal.

Beginners have a natural and almost irresistible tendency to retreat when they see two players up at the net against them. Here self-confidence, mixed even with a little touch of arrogance, must come to the beginner's aid, making him say, " I have as good a chance as they ; if I get up, I may succeed in driving them back."

You never know what you can do till you try, and one is often surprised at one's own instinctive quickness in emergency. The doubles game has grown swifter in recent years, has advanced further and further away from the old style of elegant garden-party lawn tennis, until it is now an art and a sport in itself, in which the utmost exhilaration and speed is combined with a social element and partnership that adds to the pleasure and widens the aspect of this phase of lawn tennis.

## CHAPTER X

### TECHNIQUE AND TACTICS OF THE SINGLES GAME

#### Victory in Single Combat is most Satisfying

**T**O stand alone, to fight it out for oneself —with only oneself to reckon with over defeat or victory—is really more stimulating to imagination, nerve and physical fibre than any fineness of strategy and co-operation that can be practised in the doubles game. The singles game, moreover, is generally the primary object both of professional tuition and of the vaulting ambitions of all young players. To realize these ambitions even to a modest extent is a supreme satisfaction. It may be fighting instincts that cry out for appeasement, or it may be a more æsthetic devotion to a particularly beautiful form of sport for its own sake. It makes little difference, and it is best for us, like the “young man of Cadiz, to infer that life is what it is!” The highbrows and

others who have never tried really strenuous lawn tennis can be left to wrangle over the value, or lack of value, to one's character of the singles game in comparison with other forms of sport. Our business first of all is to see and learn all we can about it, how best to play it, and how to get the most out of it: then we shall be in a position to discuss temperament, the effect of character on the game, and finally, the opposite reaction, that of the game on character.

### **The Foundation that Good Ground Strokes Provide**

The basis on which a good singles game is built consists in sound ground strokes. Sound volleying, even unsupported by really efficient work off the ground, can be very useful in the doubles game; but in the singles game such capacity is of little avail unless it rests on a basis of good ground strokes. This is the outstanding difference between these two particular forms of lawn tennis.

Without effective volleying powers no player can come to the very top in singles; but experience shows that it is possible to get astonishingly near it. There are many



well-known people of both sexes in the lawn-tennis world to-day whose play may be fairly described as a one-stroke game ; and generally the one stroke is a fine, hard, accurate forehand drive, on which the player has specialized intensely, apparently neglecting other strokes.

I have already emphasized the vital necessity for beginners of learning an all-round game. The temptation is strong for those who specialize on singles—because they are easier to get, because they give more and better exercise, or for any other reason—to drop into a one-stroke game ; and once it is dropped into it is almost impossible to get out of it.

There are many players, especially amongst the men, who are much better in singles than they are in doubles ; and these are generally base-liners of the peculiarly British type. Amongst the ladies, however, there are some well-known players with whom it is the other way about. Miss Collyer and Mrs. Lycett (*née* Miss Austin), for example, both capital volleyers, play a doubles game that is above their singles class. Mlle. Lenglen has, of course, been most famous as a singles player ; but that is only because brighter laurels rest upon the head of a singles champion—a fact which again makes us infer that life is what it is.

Actually she could hold her own in doubles with almost any three men who could be selected from the great players of the day, which indicates that her doubles game stands at least as high as her prowess in singles. Miss Helen Wills, the American champion, has a singles game that is an example to all beginners. Her success is mainly due to the fact that her play is based on the solid foundation of excellent ground strokes in full variety. She also possesses the great asset of a temperament that is almost ideal: but I will leave that subject alone for the moment, for it is not a matter of technique, and I will deal with it in a later chapter.

### **Winning Strokes and the All-round Game**

The singles player, therefore, must have all the strokes in his locker if he is to rise up and succeed; and the greatest success will generally attend the player who has the better equipment of winning strokes. The point I want to make here illustrates again the disadvantage of the one-stroke game. An intelligent opponent soon learns just what kind of balls the one-stroke player can make his winning shot off, and contrives to reduce the chances of the shots being made. It is obviously far more difficult to develop such

strategy as this against anyone who can make winners from both backhand and forehand sides, from mid-court volleys as well as at the net, who can place sufficiently well to make backhand passing strokes with an element of surprise in them, who, in fact, has the all-round game in all its fullness.

### Studying the Opponent

The problems of singles play can be looked at from two distinct and separate angles—that of your own game and that of your opponent's capabilities ; and every one knows his own game better than anyone else's. Therefore, it is most necessary always to study the opponent. I am speaking, of course, of singles that are well contested ; and, in this connection, it is necessary to put in a word of warning against despising—that is too strong a word—underestimating an opponent. Many people, especially women, suffer from nerves at the beginning of a match, so that they do not display their true form until the heat of battle stimulates them to forget their nervousness : then sometimes a surprise and a shock is administered to a player who has seen easy victory within reach.

If your opponent has a weak spot, observe the fact and estimate the extent of the weakness, but do not constantly attack it. There is no mistake more common and easy to drop into. Anyone constantly attacked on a weak spot is bound to produce a defence which becomes more and more effective as time goes on. In the strategy of a lawn-tennis single, as elsewhere, an attack is most likely to be successful when it comes as a surprise. Take the commonest example—your opponent is comparatively weak on the backhand side. Your object must be, not to put every ball into the backhand side of the court, but to get your opponent well away on to the other side before attempting a winner on the weak spot.

### **Defensive Play**

It is a mistake also to keep on attacking all the time, however confident one may feel. A little defensive play often serves both to rest one and to conceal the attack that is being prepared. It is, in fact, always desirable to keep your opponent guessing, and to act, in so far as possible, contrary to his guesses. Therefore, any general principles that are laid down about how to play

singles, must always be somewhat elastic. The broadest and soundest general principle can be stated in a very few words as follows :—

### Working for an Opportunity

“ Always keep a good length ; and maintain it with patience until your opponent gives you a short, weak ball which you can punish, following your stroke to the net with a view to finishing the next return, should there be one, with a volley.”

I believe that most experienced players will agree with this general principle, but I can hear a chorus of comment from beginners and others who experience diverse difficulties on the court : How can one constantly keep a good length without frequently hitting the ball out ? A really good-length ball must bounce not more than two yards inside the base-line. What if you hit out at a ball with the intention of following your stroke to the net, and your shot proves to be a comparative failure, off which your opponent can easily pass you ? If your opponent counters your net attack with a well-directed lob that passes over your head whilst you are still running forward, what chance have you of recovery ? Is not your simple plan

of campaign liable to be upset entirely by a drop shot which draws you up at a moment not selected by yourself?

### **The Necessity for Self-confidence**

It is perfectly true that the above fundamental principle does not tell one anything like all there is to be learnt about how to win in singles. Confidence in oneself and a real knowledge of one's limitations and powers are a most necessary part of the successful player's equipment. You will not drive the ball out of court or into the net once nervousness is overcome and you can exercise your ordinary powers unself-consciously and with confidence. You must have a plan of campaign adapted to your opponent: a strategy that defeats one may be countered effectively by another player. Moreover, you must not think of your plan of campaign whilst you are carrying out its stages. When you make the stroke on which you are going up to the net you must not be thinking about your forward run whilst you are making the shot: it must all come naturally and automatically. The attempt to concentrate on two different objects at the same time is generally disastrous on the tennis court.



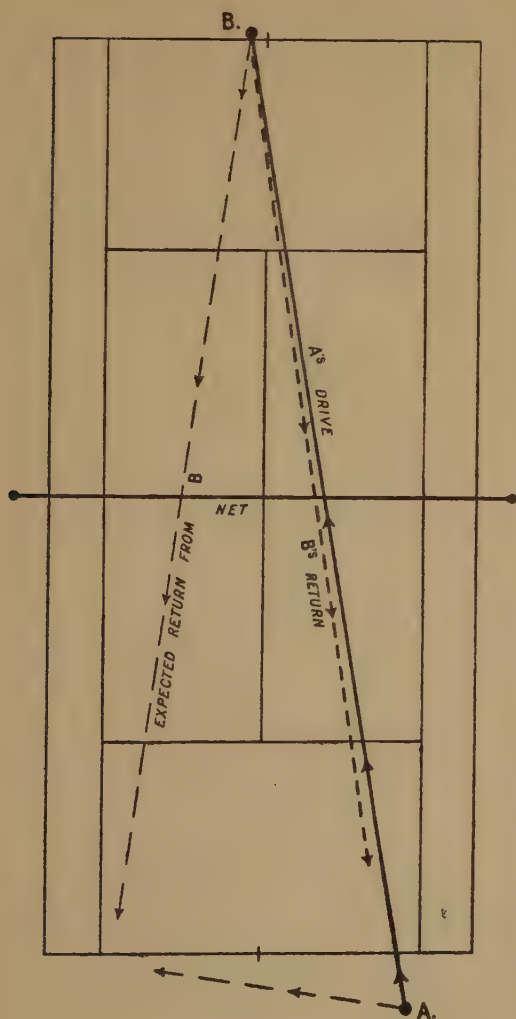
### Mental Agility and Quick Observation

How then can the singles player concentrate on keeping a good length and on watching the ball properly, and, at the same time, observe the opponent so as to discover weak points? Evidently one must have a nimble mind as well as good eyesight. A great part of the charm of the game and its universal popularity is due to the fact that, although it is an athletic sport making great demands on purely physical ability, it also exercises the wits and is a delightful mental tonic. One's thoughts must pass rapidly from one point to another of the game—with a speed, in fact, that is bewildering to beginners. From the punishing drive administered to a weak ball, to the rush for position at the net there is a complete transition from one set of ideas to another. Intense concentration on the game in which one is said to be tuned up to concert pitch implies that the mind is fully occupied and does not waste any time thinking about other things; and other things, little insignificant things, sometimes, can be intensely distracting in tearing the mind away from its task. Happy is the player who is not easily distracted!

As an example of wasting no time, observe your opponent when he or she is waiting to



# CATCHING AN OPPONENT "ON THE WRONG FOOT"



This illustrates a very favourite method of getting an opponent "on the wrong foot" and running the wrong way. A has driven a ball to B on the centre of the back line and, expecting that B will return the ball to the other side of the court, starts to run to the left. B, however, sees this move and returns the ball to the spot A has just left. It is very difficult for A to turn sufficiently quickly to counter B's return.



receive the service. You can then see from the general position and attitude the kind of stroke that is preferred, and, in particular, whether there is a backhand weakness, in which case the opponent will always tend to edge to one side so as to avoid having to return the service with a backhander. You will soon learn, almost without watching, whether your opponent's footwork is good, bad or indifferent, from the way in which your efforts at placing are dealt with. To catch your adversary on the wrong foot may or may not be easy ; but when you succeed in doing it, even if you do not get an outright winner, your position should be so strong that you should not experience the slightest difficulty in finishing the rally with the next stroke, either by coming in and volleying, or by putting the ball where it cannot possibly be reached by your opponent.

Mlle. Lenglen is by far the greatest exponent amongst women of this particular piece of strategy. With a deep drive into the right or forehand side of the court she makes her opponent prepare to defend against another drive on the backhand side, and then, at the last instant, hooks the ball back again on to the same side which the opponent has thought to abandon. This is the general method of

catching your adversary on the wrong foot, supposing that he or she is stronger on the fore- than on the backhand side. In order to be successful at it you must be able to conceal from your opponent the direction in which you are going to hit; and, to that end, a firm wrist and confident control of the ball are required.

### **The Drop Shot**

The element of surprise is also essential to success in making drop shots, and, to a lesser extent with lobs. I think that the drop shot is a stroke that deserves more cultivation than it has had hitherto. The ancient idea that it is mean and unsportsmanlike is, of course, absurd. It requires much skill to execute successfully, and is an almost certain loser if badly done, so that the opponent gets sufficient warning to run up in time. We have already said that it is a wrist stroke in which cut must be applied; and the ball must clear the net with the absolute minimum of margin, so as to bounce as little as possible. Miss Ryan and Miss Rose are both excellent exponents of this stroke; but they are at present almost the only ones. It is a very useful occasional reply to a short second service.

## The Lob

The lob, either in singles or doubles, is often considered to be a defensive measure ; whereas it is, or ought to be, an attacking stroke of the most deadly kind when well done. Realizing that great accuracy and nicety of touch are required to lob just right, most people concentrate on judging elevation and distance, forgetting direction. If a lob definitely gets over the opponent's head, so that his only chance of returning it lies in chasing it to the back of the court, then its direction does not matter much ; but if he can just reach it, it is infinitely more difficult to return from the backhand than from the forehand side. A very high backhand volley is generally admitted to be the most difficult of all strokes to make successfully with any force. Therefore, when lobbing, lob on your opponent's backhand side, unless you are absolutely certain of being able to get clean over his head.

## Speed on the Court : What it is and How to Get It

Speed is another factor of the highest importance. Speed and the all-round game are the two chief elements in the make-up

of a first-class singles player. But what exactly is meant by speed?

One reads often in reports of matches that So-and-so won, because he played a faster game than his opponent; and it would be wrong to suppose that if the contest had been a hundred-yards' race, instead of a single at lawn tennis, the result might not have been reversed. The ability to run fast is certainly a great advantage; but alone it can do little towards helping anyone to be fast on the court. As an example of what I am getting at, there is a professional lawn-tennis player in the south of France, M. Negro, who is distinctly lame, who certainly could never win a race; and yet his speed on the court is far above that of the average player.

### The Importance of Anticipation

The secret of speed about the court is contained in the word, *anticipation*. The quickest people about the court are those who can anticipate their opponents' strokes, as well as run fast and get off the mark quickly.

Many readers may here exclaim that this is nothing new, that everybody knows it;

## THE HIGH BACKHAND VOLLEY



*Photo]*

*In the timing and hitting of a high overhead ball the common tendency is to hit too late, and therefore too low. Notice that the footwork is identical with that for a backhand ground stroke, the right foot being well in front of the left.]*

*[P. G. Luck*





[Photo]

A BACKHAND VOLLEY NEAR THE NET

*In the backhand volley the weight should come forward from the left foot on to the right, and the right shoulder must point a little towards the net as in the backhand drive off the ground.*

L. G. Luck

yet at the same time, I imagine somebody who thinks he knows all about anticipation saying to himself, "I'm not so quick as So-and-so, because my anticipation is not so good as his." But why? "Oh, I suppose, because I do not begin soon enough, and I'm not so lucky in my judgments of what is going to happen—I haven't got the knack to the same extent."

This imaginary person is wrong. It is not a knack, whatever exactly that may be. It is a matter of observation. Observation should go on all the time; and it is the same with anticipation. You get your sailing orders, so to speak, when the ball is approaching your opponent and he is preparing to make his stroke. It is then that your observation of him and his racket must be most close; but when you are making your shot you must also have an idea of what the result is likely to be and get ready for it. When you are preparing for and making your stroke you must have a clear idea of the effect that you are aiming at. Even if you are in such a difficulty that all you can do is to get the ball back over the net somehow or other, so as to give your opponent a very easy one, you must be alive to the probable consequences, and immediately, without waiting to see what exactly is going

to happen, you must get to the best position for parrying a stinging return. To know what that best position is, you must have studied your opponent carefully and know his game.

### Concentration and Headwork

Anticipation then is largely a matter of headwork. You have to concentrate on what you yourself are doing when you make your own stroke ; but that is by no means the whole of the demand made upon your powers of concentration. You have to concentrate upon your opponent : particularly you must watch his racket just before he strikes, and act promptly upon what your eyes tell you. They should tell you a great deal about the direction in which the ball will go.

There must not be any hesitation about following up your observations : your feet must always be automatically at your service. If it were not that generalizations are often unsatisfactory and misleading I would not hesitate to say that in lawn tennis, " speed is anticipation."

In any case, speed, the ability to play a fast game, to get to the ball more quickly

and easily than your opponent, is not a matter of athletics alone. Intelligence plays a very important part in lawn tennis ; and that, [I personally believe, is one of the chief factors that raises the game to the high position that it occupies amongst outdoor sports.

### Some Particular Strokes

It is generally easier to make a backhand cross-court drive than to direct the ball along the side of the court from which you are striking. Picture to yourself the court and your position in one corner. Unless you have had time to turn so that your shoulders are at right angles to the net, the natural direction in which to hit is across the court. The ability to direct the ball otherwise arms the singles player with one of the most difficult and valuable strokes in singles. With it you may make a clean passing shot if your opponent comes in, or you may put it right out of reach if the adversary stays back expecting a cross-court return on the backhand side. Again Mlle. Lenglen is supreme in her ability to make this particularly useful stroke.

### **Importance of a Consistently Good Length**

Whilst still picturing yourself making a backhand return from rather far out on the left-hand side, note that such strokes must be made with good length, especially in the case of return of service from that side. It is a fact that most people find it harder to get a good-length ball from far back on the backhand side than from the corresponding position on the other side. There is a common tendency to put too much top on the ball, so that it drops too soon over the net. Particularly is this the case with a ball that is taken rather high.

### **Do Not Rely on Your Opponent's Errors**

When you succeed in getting a good length with reasonable consistency, do not be too pleased about it, even if it draws sufficient errors from your opponent to make you win. It is a fatal error, all too common, to rely on scoring off your opponent's errors. The time may come at any moment when he will cease to make them; and then defeat is yours, all the more bitter because you are beaten outright and cannot attribute your downfall to your own "temporary" unsteadiness.

ness. The one-stroke player, the base-liner who does not volley invariably relies in the last resort upon the adversary's errors.

### Another Side to the Picture

That is one side of the medallion ; now look at the other. Suppose that you have against you a stone-walling base-liner who persistently refuses to make errors. In developing your attack you are bound to make a few. You will probably come up on the wrong ball and be passed or lobbed. Instinct tells you not to take risks ; but reason says that, if you have taken good advice and spent much time and energy in acquiring an all-round game, that you must use it in order to beat your man, that you cannot expect to defeat him at his own game, that to attempt it would be like beginning all over again.

Reason is right here : you must not let your opponent bring you down to his own game. It is a very common thing to see people defeated in that way when they would have won if they had produced a strategy of their own and stuck to it. It is also quite usual to see a player who can volley reduced by a stone-waller to playing a cau-



tious game always at the back of the court ; but one never sees the base-liner induced by an audacious volleyer to come up and try his luck at the net. Human nature, with its instincts of self-preservation, is doubtless responsible for this anomaly.

### **Cultivate Variety**

Cultivate variety in your game. There is no end to the possibilities of an all-round game. Lawn tennis is not an ancient game, though it is certainly noble. It is bound to go on changing and progressing ; and if you would progress, you also must continually change.



PART III

The Human Point of View



## CHAPTER XI

### THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

LAWN tennis has been praised by innumerable writers, and I do not hesitate to join in the chorus, feeling that the best and truest things that have been said are not too good for the subject. But the question that has most exercised lawn tennis scribes of late, namely, the decline of England from first place, has not, it seems to me, been answered satisfactorily.

The outworn traditions that still cling to lawn tennis, and our innate British conservatism, have already been noticed in the first chapter, but obviously they do not cover the whole of the ground. They only touch the fringe of the question. I believe, however, that readers will find it more helpful if I set down my ideas for what they are worth, not forgetting the spirit—the mental and moral aspects of the game—than if I attempt to expound theories about the decline of England from the highest position in its records.

To go on repeating "Why? Why?" to evolve more or less ingenious answers, more or less satisfactory to national and personal pride, does not really get us much farther. It is not the direct road to definite results. That road I believe to be the rather rough one of constant application and hard work for those who are to come to the top. But every one who aspires to success at lawn tennis must get results in his or her own way, because personality is of enormous importance in the game. Even the capacity for imitating great players is part of the individuality of the beginner who is climbing up the ladder.

### **Brains and Brawn**

The great importance of personality in the game of lawn tennis is one of the factors that has helped to raise it to its high position among the amusements and sports of this world. It is played with the mind as well as with muscle. Brain and brawn have to play their parts together, and the game holds the balance between them.

Mr. W. T. Tilden, writing on this aspect of lawn tennis, says that the game is played primarily with the mind.

Any strong man may say that and believe it, realizing that a little addition to his already abundant strength could not give him nearly so great an advantage as he might get from a little extra mental agility.

Writing from the point of view of the weaker sex it appears to me that neither brains without strength nor strength without brains can get very far at lawn tennis, and that a progressive increase in both factors would lead to the greatest success at the game.

### The World's Desire

I think that the broadest view of lawn tennis is that it happens exactly to suit our present state of civilization and intelligence. This may sound cynical to some—to those who affect to despise the state of life in which we find ourselves; but lawn tennis is a social force, drawing together people who might otherwise stand aloof, including even some of these cynics.

It does this because it offers what people happen to desire—excitement without danger, contest of wits and strength alike, social intercourse and pleasant exercise in the open air; and all this can be had easily and

cheaply, and far on until late in life. No other game at the present day has quite so much to give.

But when we come to the universal desire for success, then we find that the very fact that lawn tennis has such high qualities as a game and is so popular, makes success at it harder than in almost any other sport.

There is *not* plenty of room at the top. There never is, in keenly competitive games, it seems to me; and anyone who gets to the top occupies a most precarious position. It is impossible to rest upon a reputation. One's claim to whatever position one may occupy in the lawn-tennis world is put to the test at every match; whereas, I suppose that in literature, science, or politics, one might rest on laurels alone quite comfortably for quite a long time.

### **Is There Any Orthodox Style of Play?**

There are first-class players to-day whose style is said to be unorthodox; but I would go further than that, and say that there is not, and cannot be, an absolute standard of orthodoxy. Miss Ryan, for example, employs a chop stroke probably more than any other well-known player. René Lacoste, the young

French champion, uses a sliced forehand drive that is peculiarly his own. Shimidzu, the famous Japanese champion, and Mrs. Shepherd Barron are also outstanding examples of first-class players whose methods might be considered unorthodox. I doubt if any professional lawn tennis teacher would recommend these methods to his average pupil. But teachers are too apt to impose their ideas of orthodox style upon their pupils, and to neglect the development of any special individual aptitudes that they may possess.

In the second part of this book I have indicated the methods that seem to me to be best, or, rather, that are best for me; and I warn my readers that these do not necessarily apply to every case. Having guarded myself in this way, I can proceed with a clear conscience, especially after stressing the fact that success is always hard and always only for the few.

If these few were the only ones who could get the good things out of lawn tennis, then I should not feel justified in writing a book about the game. But the many who play can all enjoy themselves to the full; and even if they have high hopes of real success, and these hopes are deferred, their hearts need not be so very sick.



## **The Road that Leads to Success is Rough**

First of all, for success, one's heart and mind and all the rest of one, whatever that may be, must be on the game and nowhere else.

Just think for a moment what this means. As I have said before, just think of yourself on a tennis court, but imagine that everything, except the court, the net, the balls, the rackets, and your opponent, is swept out of existence; then you will have an idea of what your mental attitude towards the game should be, if you are to make the most of your powers and have the best chance of winning.

Mlle. Lenglen is undoubtedly a genius at the game. She has taken a vast amount of pains over it, and anyone who has watched her must admit that she has the other kind of genius also—the natural genius that makes her play so beautiful to look at.

She has all the strokes. Her play is almost perfect as an "all-round" game. Her methods in every department of the game, as regards stroke production, supply the best possible illustrations of how to do it.

I have already observed that it is fatal to take the line of least resistance in developing your game of lawn tennis; but, after all, it is natural to do so, and that is why so many

players never show signs of rising above mediocrity. This idea of taking the line of least resistance, referred to in Chapter V, needs a little further explanation.

You know that neither Mlle. Lenglen nor any of the other champions of the day took the line of least resistance in developing their style and methods ; but, at the same time, possibly you do not aspire to become quite so brilliant as they are. Perhaps your first object in playing lawn tennis is to get as much pleasure and beneficial exercise out of it as possible, and the improvement of your game comes second. But one of my objects here in this book is to show that you will achieve the first object most completely by a diligent pursuit of the second.

You will get more pleasure and benefit if you have the strength of mind to make yourself acquire an all-round game, than if you let yourself remain in the particular groove in which you happen to start. If you find, as many have found, that you win more points by staying at the back of the court than by coming up to volley, then it requires real strength of mind to sacrifice the points, games, and even matches, in your efforts to learn to volley.

This argument applies specially to women in the mixed doubles game. Their partners,

appreciating their steadiness at the back of the court, do not urge them to go up and try their luck at the net. It requires initiative and courage to go and do it, facing temporary failure ; but it is worth it. Once the initial difficulties are past, the game will take on a new interest and gain fresh variety, your keenness will be increased and with it your ability to make still further progress.

After concentration, application and the taking of infinite pains, the most important thing is to avoid concentrating on one particular stroke to the exclusion or neglect of others.

If you have a particular weakness you must never be satisfied until you have got rid of it entirely.



Photo]

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc

A LOW FOREHAND VOLLEY, ILLUSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THE FEET PLACED RIGHTLY AND OF CONCENTRATING UPON THE BALL

*In low volleys the ball is struck when only a foot or so from the ground. If it, therefore, is necessary to bend down. Do not get too close to the ball, or you will get "hooked up," and have to take the stroke off your heels.*

## THE LOW FOREHAND VOLLEY



[Photo]

[P. G. Luck]

ONE OF THE MORE DIFFICULT STROKES THAT OCCURS FREQUENTLY IN THE DOUBLES GAME, A HARD LOW BALL DIRECTED DOWN THE MIDDLE LINE WHICH HAS TO BE VOLLEED BY ONE OR OTHER OF THE RECEIVERS. *The ball must be kept low, and everything depends upon the angle of the racket. Excessive upward inclination of the face of the*

## CHAPTER XII

### TEMPERAMENT IN LAWN TENNIS

NO doubt this subject might be approached from the psychological, or even the psycho-analytical, point of view ; but readers need not be alarmed, for, in a strenuous lawn-tennis match, there is no time for groping. Defeat or victory come quickly, and the part that temperament has played in the contest is often not understood until afterwards, if then. But it is a big part and therefore worth studying from a practical standpoint.

To account for the way in which different players act and react on the court one might consider our alleged, ape-like ancestors, or penetrating still further back, think of the age of fishes. But it takes a human being to play lawn tennis. A fish would have no chance, and even the most intelligent ape would need a big handicap.

### The Athlete at his Best

Why is it that people love to watch first-class lawn tennis and will pay good money to do so ? If the game were played by mechanical Robots, no onlooker would come a second time. I believe that it is largely because men and women are seen at their best in a hard struggle on the court ; and sometimes also, to add interest of a different kind, they are seen at their worst.

As a sop to the intellectuals I was going to say that they are seen at their best physically ; but the line of demarcation between things physical and intellectual is not clearly defined for me. It is impossible to play lawn tennis really well, or any other athletic game for the matter of that, without doing it intelligently ; to succeed, one must be at one's best ; and that one cannot be, if a state of nervous irritation, or even anger, is allowed to get control. Many a player is prevented definitely and for ever from achieving first-class rank by nothing more than a failure of self-control at critical times. Every aspiring beginner should bear this fact in mind ; for, as people begin, so do they generally go on.

The fundamental rule, therefore, can be stated quite easily, though experience shows that it is often difficult to follow. " In a lawn-



tennis match, be at your best, and try to make that best better."

If lawn tennis brings out the best, the most positive and decisive characteristics in the player, then that player's temperament may be said to be the ideal one for the court. But in the player there must be a perfect balance between self-control and impulsiveness. If impulsiveness gets the better of self-control, unsteadiness and even wildness, may appear. If self-control suppresses determination, the capacity for meeting an extreme emergency may be reduced. I have already emphasized the value of watching first-class play, and the beginner can learn more about the right kind of temperament by watching than in any other way.

### The Winning Temperament

The influence of example is undoubtedly great, both as pattern and as warning. To have the winning temperament is a phrase that is often used ; but does anybody, even the winner, know exactly what it is ?

No nation has a monopoly of the best characteristics in athletic games. In particular, the old idea that the Latin races are temperamentally handicapped in such con-

tests as lawn-tennis championships, has been thoroughly exploded in recent years by the successes of young French players.

### **Temperament and Mlle. Lenglen**

In thinking of French players one thinks first of all of Mlle. Lenglen. Many people who are not very well acquainted either with the game itself or with her play, are under the impression that the French lady champion has been handicapped throughout her career by a nervous temperament. I consider that almost the opposite is the truth, and that she has had so much success because she is keyed up to the highest pitch all the time. But the ability to be always keyed up obviously imposes the severest strain on the nerves. Her record shows it. No player in the world has played a bigger continuous series of matches in which topmost form has been maintained. All other successful players have had more lapses involving defeat, and no other player has had to sustain the strain of so much public comment and expectation. It may be urged that it is impossible always to be at one's best, physically as well as intellectually ; but it seems to me that Mlle. Lenglen has come nearer to it than any other player.

## The Sporting Attitude

Although no country can now claim superiority in the matter of tennis temperament, British sportsmen undoubtedly showed the rest of the world the right attitude in this as in other athletic pursuits. Self-control and imperturbability are on the negative side in the required attitude, whilst concentration, perseverance, patience, and, above all, courage, are the positive qualities. Although our best players are, at present, not the world's best, we can show plenty of examples of the right moral fibre. Moreover, often more grit is required to lose well than to win. Amongst the younger Englishmen who have represented this country in Davis Cup matches Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Wheatley may be mentioned as illustrating the best kind of temperament ; and Colonel Kingscote has more than once fought a losing match against one of the world's best players, taking him to five sets with unflagging persistence.

The best of the younger French players display the characteristics that have been considered to be peculiarly British, and add to them in certain cases the impetuosity that is especially their own. No one, however, is more phlegmatic and imperturbable than M. René Lacoste, the twenty-year-old finalist at

Wimbledon in 1924. Nothing ever disturbs him, and he can play a losing game as stoutly as anybody. M. Henri Cochet is much the same, and M. Jean Borotra, champion in 1924, whilst extremely exuberant, is never out of temper.

### The Ideal Temperament

To have the ideal temperament one must be always at one's best, keyed up to concert pitch, full of the vigour and impetuosity which make brilliant achievements possible in extreme emergencies; and at the same time one must be under perfect control. Like other absolute ideals it is probably unattainable. I believe that the Latin races at their best have a slight advantage over us in the matter of lawn-tennis temperament. Their impetuosity and *élan* make it possible for them to surpass themselves in rising to [an occasion such as hard-fought lawn-tennis matches often present. I do not mean to belittle the patience and perseverance characteristic of Anglo-Saxons, doubtless the most effective forces in the world in other fields. But modern lawn tennis is full of moments which require an instant response of all the forces of one's being; and the Latin races *are* responsive; they *do* react, rapidly and obviously.

The player who is full of impetuosity and *élan*, so that he can, at times, surpass himself, will at other times fail to come up to himself. It is not humanly possible to surpass oneself to order and by an effort of will. The will can do all that is required in the matters of self-control, patience and perseverance; but it cannot supply the *élan*, which is in its nature spontaneous. Grit, determination, and the fighting spirit can emulate, and even beat it; since they are more permanent and reliable qualities. Character, which no amount of professional tuition or amateur advice can hope to teach, counts for a great deal in lawn tennis.

The best character is neither too volatile nor too solemn. Do not be too solemn about it: do not forget that it is a game—I will not say, *only* a game. Britons still incline towards solemnity at games. In the days when we were supreme at all sports, the witty Frenchman remarked that the one thing we could not do was to *play* games, meaning that we worked very hard at them. Now the tables are turned, and our men like to discuss their chances over a glass of port or a whisky peg of an evening, whilst foreigners train and abstain.

So the pendulum swings; but the people who get furthest are those who do not swing

with it, keeping rather to middle courses. The greatest players so far have not been "tennis mad." It is necessary to be intimately acquainted with the lawn-tennis world to understand that phrase. The greatest players so far, have been people with breadth of interest in life. The kind of enthusiasm most required for success has nothing to do with monomania.

### A Glance at the Moral Aspects of the Game

I should like to prove that lawn tennis stands very high as a training for the young, and that our boys' schools are making a sad mistake in neglecting it as they do. Girls' schools have been less conservative in this matter, but chiefly on account of the social value of the game. That aspect is by no means negligible from the masculine point of view also. It is not so much a matter of fashion as that lawn tennis is a greater asset in after life than cricket and football, however admirable these games may be in boyhood.

What can lawn tennis do for adolescent character? The singles game puts a youngster on his own. The stimulus of competition is there with a scope for initiative unsurpassed by any other sport. Quickness of wits—a



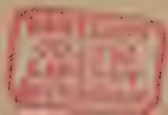
quality more necessary in life to-day than ever it was before—is absolutely essential for success. The deplorable effects of lack of self-control are brought home to the individual on the tennis court with a force and clearness that do not obtain elsewhere.

Patience, perseverance and pluck are a trinity of qualities to which no education authority can take exception. They have to be sustained all the time in a tennis match, whereas in some other athletic games various qualities are called for at different times.

Those who deride lawn tennis in comparison with other games are, for the most part, elderly, or even old—their misfortune, not their fault. The value of lawn tennis in the development of character can only be proved, like that of the pudding, in the results; and a heavy responsibility rests on all players who show lack of self-control and ill temper on the court, especially if they are *near* the front rank. In the front rank they can never be.

### Individual Initiative

The singles game calls for individual initiative, sound and rapid judgment in emergencies and all the other qualities that I have already





enumerated. Biologists are impressed by the importance of the "play period" in the lives of higher animals as a preparation for the real thing. Let them consider the young human animal learning lawn tennis. In the case of most animals other than humans, each one plays for itself and itself alone; and cats, for example, never learn any better. They never learn to increase their powers and usefulness by combining. The power of combined effort is second only in importance to individual initiative and enterprise, which brings us to that most close and sympathetic form of combination that is required for success in the doubles game.

### **The Team Spirit**

The principal argument of those who oppose the introduction of lawn tennis at boys' schools is based on the notion that the team-spirit with its salutary discipline is absent. Before inquiring whether tennis offers sufficiently weighty compensating advantages, let us see whether the argument itself is altogether justified. Much modern lawn tennis is played in teams of six under a captain who may or may not be a player. Every

club runs such teams. Nations send their teams the utmost distances to represent and uphold them. What moral difference is there between the tennis-player who scores a win for his side in a five-set singles match and the cricketer who scores a century for his side? The tennis-player may be thinking first of all of his own play, and possible world championships ahead; and so may the cricketer be thinking first of all of his batting average and personal reputation. In either case the attitude is undesirable. In either case the captain of the side needs players who can make supreme efforts for the side when necessary, or efface themselves in favour of others when occasion demands.

The partnership between two batsmen knocking up a big score for their side has no more of the team spirit than has the quick, sympathetic understanding required between two players in a double at lawn tennis. Each player must completely understand his partner's weaknesses as well as his strong points, must give way at times and exceed his normal share at other times; and it must all be done without an instant's hesitation. What a training for the interplay of life!

### Some Comparisons with Other Games

Lawn tennis does not need to belittle other games in order to maintain its rightful position. Football seems to me, and hockey from personal experience I know to be, magnificent from the point of view of the team-spirit, discipline, and self-sacrifice when required. Could cricket really not survive the withdrawal of a few boys who showed great promise at lawn tennis, the absence from the cricket field of say half a dozen in a school of a thousand ?

If it could not, then the position of cricket at public schools must be very weak. Actually, of course, cricket is very strong at our great public schools, and rightly so. The withdrawal of a few boys for lawn tennis would not hurt it at all ; and, until something of the kind is done, we as a nation are likely to remain behind at lawn tennis as regards our masculine players, at any rate. And we lose far more by it than the mere prestige of being first in a particular form of athletic sport. Apart from its effects upon character and its value to the individual far on into middle life, lawn tennis is now the most international of all games.

The appeal of lawn tennis begins at a higher stratum in the social hierarchy than some other outdoor games. This may sound snobbish to some ; but I cannot help that : it has to be stated. The fact that it makes appeal to the higher social strata in every nation is due to its intrinsic merits ; and these are composed very largely by the reactions that I have discussed between personality and the game. This same fact also gives it a higher international value than any other game. As a world educator it is extremely potent, largely because the game enters into the lives and commands the interest of the upper classes in the countries that take to it with enthusiasm. Thence it filters down easily to the masses of the people, doing much good on the way, because it is not handicapped by being expensive. Hunting and polo are pastimes exclusively for the rich. Lawn tennis is not thus limited.

Is the element of snobbishness here ? Perhaps ; but to criticize the manners and customs of the world, as at present arranged, is the very last thing that I want to be suspected of attempting. I start from the inference that " life is what it is," and that the advocate of lawn tennis must state the case for it accordingly.

### What Some People Miss

It is, of course, particularly difficult for me to get the point of view of those who reckon games to be accidental features of life, of an importance so small as to be altogether inconsiderable. That there are such people, and distinguished ones, I know. Mr. Bernard Shaw, for example, has stated his intolerance of the, to him, supremely boring nature of all games ; and I suppose that there are many who agree with him there. Confronted with such an attitude, I can only think of what they miss. We all have to miss something—a great deal, in fact, they may reply ; we have not got the temperament for sport and games. That brings me back to the wrong temperament on the tennis court.

### The Fear of Defeat

The worst kind of temperament is not that which is easily discouraged—the player who gets downhearted when things go wrong, and so, is easily defeated. A cynic has said, that if you cannot gamble and win, then the next best thing is to gamble and lose. The loser can get something—indeed a lot—out of the game, if he takes his defeat in a proper spirit. The fear of defeat is responsible for more failures in the lawn tennis world than defeat itself.

The right temperament does not fear defeat : the wrong one does, because it is egotistical. The wrong temperament thinks always of self, sees the game and the gallery as means to self-aggrandizement, loses control when things go wrong, and so can never reach the top of the tree. Is it necessary to point out that this Nemesis of the selfish player, which is a matter of practical experience, exonerates the game of lawn tennis from the charges of its opponents, who claim that it is selfish ? No selfish game could be such a rich source of happiness as is lawn tennis.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MATCH PLAY

**T**OURNAMENTS of all kinds are still on the increase. None can escape the claims of match play. The veriest beginner, the most sober and retiring veteran, alike are liable to be roped in, willy nilly, for some little American tournament at a country house, where there is perhaps only one grass court. The competition complex cuts a big figure in the lawn-tennis world to-day. In the old days when women wore long trains on the tennis lawn, I imagine that strenuous competition would have been considered almost indecent. We observe that the world has changed, and there is no need for us to criticize the change.

#### Matches are Meant to be Enjoyed

We go in for match play and support lawn-tennis competitions primarily for pleasure ; and, although there is actually much more



## THE LOW BACKHAND VOLLEY



Photo]

:[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.

### THE LOW BACKHAND VOLLEY

*In this photograph the wrist is in the wrong position; it should be slightly below the head of the racket, and the player should not get too close to the ball. In a low volley, as shown above, when the ball is struck only a foot or so from the ground, it is usually necessary to bend down. Keep the arm straight and the grip firm. Accurate placing is impossible with a loose grip.*

## THE LOW BACKHAND VOLLEY



*Photo,*

*[P. G. Luck*

GETTING DOWN TO A LOW BALL SO AS TO MAKE THE STROKE WITH THE HEAD OF THE RACKET SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE LEVEL OF THE WRIST

in it, that is the fundamental fact of the matter. If tournament 'players' neither thought that they were going to enjoy, nor actually enjoyed their most strenuous contests, there would soon be no more tournaments, and the great game of lawn tennis would very soon wilt.

It is, of course, a matter of common observation that players in matches often do not appear to be enjoying their struggles. They suffer from severe nerve strain, and cases of prostration are not unknown; but do not these conditions prevail in every human activity?

The stimulus of competition is the breath of life to every one sometimes and to some people at all times.

In the lawn-tennis world I believe that it is best to be in the first category. Let it be sometimes, not always. Be able to do without the excitement, but be stimulated by the contest and the roar of the crowd when occasion demands that you show the utmost of which you are capable.

The greatest asset a match-player can have is the power of producing topmost form just when it is most needed. With some people the necessity, the critical situation, and the onlookers, combine to inspire them, whilst with others it is just the reverse; and it is,

of course, the former—the born match-players—who come to the top.

### The Qualities Required

The chief positive quality required is courage, and the chief negative quality, lack of self-consciousness. Courage is not quite the right word : it is a little too heroic, a little out of place, for a game the first purpose of which is pleasure. But my readers, especially those of my own sex, will understand what I mean. The most heroic kind of courage, I suppose, is that which does not forget self and all that is involved in the way of possible disaster, but still goes at it, whatever *it* may be. Less heroic is the blind courage manifested when everything, including self, is forgotten, except the object in view. Such a mental and moral condition can be brought about in a lawn-tennis match by extreme concentration ; and it is that which is required. Surrounding conditions must not distract, however distracting they may be ; but they may stimulate, as the music at the cinema somehow or other helps the mind to follow what is going on upon the screen.

The difference between matches and prac-

## HANDICAP TABLE OF DIFFERENTIAL ODDS

[illegible]

TABLE I. *Received Odds.*  
For explanation see page 212.

## HOW TO READ THE HANDICAP TABLE OF RECEIVED ODDS

To find the odds for any given handicap in which one or both players receive more than 15·3 find the lesser of the two handicaps in the column and diagonal of Roman figures on the left. Following the appropriate Roman numeral to the right you will get the odds vertically underneath the Roman figure to which the greater handicap belongs.

An example will make this clear: suppose one player receives 15 whilst the other receives 30·2. In the column on the left we find 15· against VI; proceeding along the horizontal line opposite VI until we are under XIV to which 30·2 belongs, we see that the odds are 15·4 in favour of the player who receives 30·2. That is to say he gets 15 in every game with an additional 15 in 4 games out of 6, making 30 in 4 games out of 6, and 15 in 2 of the 6 games. The score sheet is made out (printed) to show on which games in the set the 15 games occur.

It will be noticed that only odds exceeding 15·3 can be found from these tables. Odds less than 15·3 are taken at their face (or arithmetical) value, for example, ·4 against 15·2 would be ·4 in favour of the larger handicap.

The figures ·1, ·2, ·3, ·4, ·5, imply sixths, i.e. 15 is received as the case may be in 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 games out of every 6.

When a set is finished the handicap score does not run straight on into the next set, but begins afresh.

The idea of not taking the longer odds at their face value may be grasped from the analogy of a 100 yards race in which one runner has 40 yards start and the other 30 yards; the advantage of the  $40 - 30 = 10$  yards start is obviously greater than 10 per cent.

tice-games increases as the standard of play rises ; and, as I have already pointed out, aspiring players must have practice-games in which they do not set up winning as the primary object in view. Learning about oneself, about one's own game, must be the primary object in practice. When it comes to match play, you have to be armed with full knowledge about yourself and what you can do, which knowledge helps to bring self-confidence ; and you have to learn as quickly as possible all you can about your opponent. I am speaking of matches that are well contested.

Above all do not underestimate yourself. Beginners and players who are sometimes rather impolitely called " rabbits " occasionally make miraculous shots ; and usually, no one is more surprised than the rabbit himself. But he should control his surprise. He should reflect that the marvellous shot may not have come about entirely by chance, that he may have it in him all the time to make such strokes. If the stroke *happens* to be made with movements that conform approximately to orthodox style, then the probability that it all came about by chance is very remote ; and that is the beginning of better things—the end of the " rabbit " stage is in sight.



### Breaking a Series of Defeats

When anyone meets a stronger player with a greater reputation and is beaten, it is the greatest mistake for the defeated one to conclude that that player can always beat him, especially if he has been able to put up any sort of a fight. The moral advantage of one victory is considerable, and takes a lot of overcoming on the part of the defeated one. I have experienced it myself. I have been defeated again and again by Miss Ryan ; but when first I was able to win against her, I went on to defeat her several times running. This series of wins for me did not represent anything like such a big change in our relative standards of play as would appear on paper. I give this personal example, because no match-player is more stout-hearted than Miss Ryan, and she has defeated me since that time. We seem to have reached a position in which there is no ascendancy.

The best match-players always have something in reserve with which to rise to an occasion—to meet an extreme emergency. This may appear to be only another way of saying that the greatest asset is the power of producing one's topmost form when occasion demands it ; but there is more in it than that.

### Something in Reserve

In a closely contested match which swings first one way and then the other, to say that either player should have something in reserve appears to imply that he should not be doing his utmost all the time. But the "something in reserve" is a faculty. The player may really be doing his best all the time; but yet, when the supremely critical moment arrives, he may do better still. The little bit extra of effort and brilliance is called forth by the moment. This faculty does not usually form a part of the equipment of the stone-walling type of player, and the one-stroke player can never have it. It belongs to those who have the all-round game. Their subconscious powers are doubtless developed by the efforts that they have put into acquiring all the strokes; and these powers come to the surface in emergencies. By acquiring an all-round game you can make your play even more complete than you are normally likely to realize.

On the other hand the weakness of the player who has not got the all-round game is liable to find him out just at the very moment that is most critical. In every closely contested match there are periods when one side or the other has the upper

hand. The player who is a stone-waller and nothing more cannot usually regain ascendancy after once losing it. He must win by a considerable margin or not at all. It is true that the brilliantly resourceful player is liable to pay the penalty of his brilliancy by occasional lapses—times when he fails to surpass himself in a crisis. But, none the less, he gets further than the stone-waller can ever do.

A few examples will make this argument much clearer. In the hard-court championships at St. Cloud in 1923 Mr. William Johnstone, the winner, lost sets to every player whom he encountered on his way to victory. Yet, in the minds of the onlookers, there was never much doubt that he would win. M. Jean Borotra, champion at Wimbledon in 1924, frequently loses sets and sometimes whole matches to players who are far below his best form. When at his best, he finds himself and takes hold of things at the critical moment.

### Tempered Steel

Of course, temperament has a great deal to do with it; and it is impossible to discuss match play without thinking of temperament. I sometimes wish that it were not

quite so prominent. The word is often used as a polite term for temper. I have already said my say about ideals of temperament ; but temper is another matter. Tempered steel, I understand, is the toughest kind. The temper, as distinguished from temperament, of the match-player must be of that kind, as tough as possible, so that it never yields to any strain, however great. There is no need to dwell upon the deplorable aspect of loss of temper on the part of a prominent player in a match. The subject has been well ventilated. We are concerned here with the effects of temper on a player's chances in a match.

To control the temper is not enough. It must really need little or no control. Like your foot-work it must, to a great extent, look after itself when you are concentrating your utmost power on an important match. If you get annoyed, and yet do not show it, either to your opponent or the audience, such private loss of temper will still be a big handicap—almost as great as if you made a deplorable public display of anger. The match-player's temper, therefore, must be so tough as to be unbreakable.

But one is human, it may be urged, both on the court and elsewhere. Combat and temper are inseparable things. One gathers

from our popular science exponents that there are profound physiological reasons for the rising of passions in any hard struggle—the natural production of adrenalin and excess of sugar in the blood, for example. You cannot rule out such things by saying that one's temper must look after itself.

The best way is to take the attitude that, as Mr. Tilden says, lawn tennis is played primarily with the mind. The match-player must be resourceful mentally as well as physically. He must have a reserve of philosophy to fall back upon when required. He must be able to counter the adrenalin effect by the largeness of his mental outlook. Crises come and go: one wins and one loses; and there should be something learnt from both experiences. As regards the experiences themselves the quotation from Kipling displayed prominently at Wimbledon gets right down to it far better than anything I can say:—

If you can meet with triumph or disaster  
And treat these two impostors just the same.

### Stage Fright

The kind of nervousness that is akin to stage fright can be overcome by anyone, and it seems to me that it ought not to be very

difficult to conquer. But it is a fact that many players, especially women, suffer from it acutely in matches.

There is a classical motto about work conquering all things ; and, though it is a game that we are considering, the saying can be applied. By concentrating on the one thing you forget others—even stage fright, and the roar of the most formidable crowd.

Apart from your actual play, your strokes, your tactics and those of your opponent, there is one thing that it is vitally necessary for you to concentrate upon—that is the score.

### **Playing to the Score**

In a match, or in any hard-fought contest in which you are out to win, you must play to the score. In first-class lawn tennis the player's tactics are always influenced by the score ; but in games of the garden party type (this distinction is not intended to be contemptuous) it is a matter of common experience that the score is often forgotten. In a match, the fact of having an umpire relieves one of the necessity for keeping the score, so far as the rules of the game are concerned. But, I repeat, every match-player



should keep the score in his or her own mind ; and I will now proceed to give some of the reasons for this as they appear to me.

The second point in any game is more important than the first, and the third is the most important point of the game. After the third point has been decided, one or other side is bound to have a lead, either of 30-15 or 40-love. The player who has the lead should then go out for an attack, either to secure a lead of 40-15 which gives two chances for the game, or, from 40-love with its three chances, to win the game outright. If it is your opponent who has the lead your object will be to equalize, bringing the position back to an even chance for the game. But if you achieve this object, you have, morally and actually, rather more than an even chance for the game, because the loss of a lead invariably shakes confidence more or less. Therefore, when your opponent is leading in any game, your chief endeavour must be to get on equal terms and so shake him in this way.

There is more than one way to retrieve a losing position in any game. It depends very largely on the qualities of your adversary. If you have lost two points by unsuccessful attacks at the net, your opponent may con-



# HANDICAP TABLE OF DIFFERENTIAL ODDS

	X 15-4	XI 15-5	XII 30-	XIII 30-1	XIV 30-2	XV 30-3	XVI 30-4	XVII 30-5	XVIII 40-
I .1	15-3	15-4	15-5	30-	30-1	30-2	30-3	30-4	30-5
II .2	15-2	15-3	15-4	15-4	15-	30-	30-1	30-2	30-3
III .3	15-	15-1	15-2	15-3	15-4	15-5	30-	30-1	30-2
IV .4	-5	15-	15-1	15-2	15-3	15-4	15-5	15-5	30-
V .5	-5	-5	15-	15-1	15-2	15-3	15-3	15-4	15-5
VI 15-	-3	-4	-5	15-	15-1	15-2	15-2	15-3	15-4
VII 15-1	-3	-3	-4	-5	15-	15-1	15-2	15-2	15-3
VIII 15-2	-2	-2	-3	-4	-5	15-	15-	15-1	15-2
IX 15-3	-1	-2	-2	-3	-4	-5	-5	15-	15-1
	X 15-4	-1	-2	-2	-3	-4	-5	-5	15-
		XI 15-5	-1	-2	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5
			XII 30-	-1	-1	-2	-3	-3	-4
				XIII 30-1	-1	-2	-2	-3	-4
					XIV 30-2	-1	-2	-2	-3
						XV 30-3	-1	-1	-2
							XVI 30-4	-1	-2
								XVII 30-5	-1

TABLE II. *Owed* ODDS.  
For explanation see page 222.

## HOW TO READ THE HANDICAP TABLE OF OWED ODDS

To find the odds for any given handicap in which one or both players owe more than 15·3 find the lesser of the two handicaps in the column and diagonal of Roman figures on the left. Following the appropriate Roman numeral to the right you will get the odds vertically underneath the Roman figure to which the greater handicap belongs.

An example will make this clear: suppose one player owes 15 whilst the other owes 30·2. In the column on the left we find 15· against VI; proceeding along the horizontal line opposite VI until we are under XIV to which 30·2 belongs, we see that the odds are 15·1 in favour of the player who owes 30·2. That is to say he gets 15 every game with an additional 15 in 1 game out of 6, making 30 in 1 game out of 6, and 15 in 5 of the 6 games. The score sheet is made out (printed) to show on which games of the set the 15 games occur.

It will be noticed that only odds exceeding 15·3 can be found from these tables. Odds less than 15·3 are taken at their face (or arithmetical) value, for example, ·4 against 15·2 would be ·4 in favour of the larger handicap.

The figures ·1, ·2, ·3, ·4, ·5 imply sixths, i.e. 15 is owed as the case may be in 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 games out of every 6.

When a set is finished the handicap score does not run straight on into the next set, but begins afresh.

The idea of not taking the longer odds at their face value may be grasped from the analogy of a 100 yards race in which one runner has 40 yards start and the other 30 yards; the advantage of the  $40-30=10$  yards start is obviously greater than 10 per cent.

clude that the attacking spirit will have temporarily subsided in you. Therefore, by a third surprise attack the tables can often be completely turned and the adversary disconcerted ; but the total score—the score in games and sets—must here be taken into consideration.

The score guides you in your decisions when to take risks and when to play for safety. For example, a difficult drive down the side-line from the backhand corner of your court may be an invaluable winner when it comes off, but should not be attempted with the game score at 40-15 against you, unless you have a commanding lead on the total score. If this is not so and you are seeking to retrieve a game with a score of 40-15 against you, you must necessarily exercise a certain amount of extra patience until a more obvious opportunity of bringing off a winning shot occurs, not, of course, leaving the occurrence to chance, but working for it steadily.

The most vital game in a set is generally the seventh. If the score is three-all its importance is obvious. From a score of 4-2 it makes all the difference if the commanding lead of 5-2 is obtained—a lead which can be fought down only by taking the set to advantage games.

If you are leading 4-2 and it is your service, you have an additional reason for wanting to make it 5-2, because at 4-3, with the service against you, your chance of being caught up is increased.

If, when the score is deuce, you have a long fight for the game, never lose patience. The moral effect of winning a game after a deuce-vantage battle is considerable. Your lead must be a very large one for you to be able to afford to spare yourself the fatigue of a long deuce-vantage tussle. In fact, in a well contested match, you can never afford it.

### **A Strong Opponent is the Weaker Player's Opportunity**

We have so far looked at the question of match play perhaps rather more from the point of view of the winner than of the loser. What of the loser who is defeated, not because he lacks any of the mental and moral qualities required, but because he is frankly outclassed?

If you are the weaker player, if you are up against an opponent who is definitely stronger than you and who also has the prestige of a reputation, some people will

## THE LOW BACKHAND VOLLEY



Photo]

[Cecil B. Waterlow, B.Sc.

### MEETING A FAST BALL ON THE BACKHAND SIDE

*The face of the racket is almost vertical and the weight is on the right foot. The right arm is straight and keeps the racket well away from the body, which is bent to get well down to the ball. Notice the thumb giving support to the back of the racket handle.*

## THE HALF VOLLEY



Photo]

THE HALF VOLLEY, BACKHAND

Sport & General

*This is a very difficult stroke, and the player should always try to avoid getting into positions from which this shot has to be made. It is a very difficult matter on any but an almost perfect court.*

advise you just to play your normal game as well as you can, even though it be obvious that that game is outclassed all the time. Others will say, since your normal game is fairly certain of defeat, try to play an abnormal game ; you can only be beaten once.

Of these two pieces of advice, on the whole, I prefer the second. The reason for the first kind of advice is that it is a matter of common experience that the weaker player tends to get flustered, and so to do wild and ridiculous things. But there is no real reason why he should get flustered, even if he tries to play an abnormal game.

It is really a great chance to be matched against a stronger player with a greater reputation, and full advantage should be taken of it. You know that your normal, probably steady, game is not good enough ; and if you content yourself with merely producing it, you will get no good out of the match—possibly harm in the form of discouragement. If, on the other hand, you try to play above your usual form, try to hit harder than usual, fully realizing what you are doing and that you are not likely to win, even if your shots come off ; then you will be taking an important step towards improving your game and some day being able to beat the better man.



### **Improvement is Often Sudden and Unexpected**

If you do this and succeed at the first or second encounter with a superior player in raising the ordinary level of your game towards his, and still you are defeated—still there is a margin between you to be filled up—do not be discouraged. Realize that your opponent is the better player and give him the credit for it. Realize also that you have started to catch up his form, and that in this, as in other matters, the first step is harder than those that follow.

It should not be difficult to appreciate this last point, because beginners are so often observed to remain about the same for a time, and then suddenly to make surprising progress. Many things may happen to make the beginner take the first important step ; but the best thing, the best way, is for him to get up against a stronger player in a match and try to do better than he has ever done before. The stronger player, for his part, in order to maintain his position must be very careful not to underestimate his opponents, a point that is more obvious, and so needs less emphasis, than the tendency on the part of those who are struggling upwards to underestimate themselves.

In a match there is a big difference between meeting a player whom you have played before and one whose game is quite new to you. In the former case, if your opponent is stronger than you are, it is more difficult to follow the advice that I have just given. But in the latter case, when there is no prestige of previous victory to be overcome, you can go ahead full of hope and untrammelled by depressing memories.

Always keep full of hope. If it is not the hope of an immediate win, let it be the hope of improvement leading to future victories. Fortunately for us this advice is not so very difficult to follow, because "hope springs eternal . . ."

### Weeds in the Garden

I have spoken of nerve strain, of stage fright, of strain upon the temper, whilst still maintaining that the chief object of lawn-tennis matches is pleasure. These things need not terrify any prospective competitor. I mention them only because they are known to exist, and in order to show how to avoid them. Displays of ill temper on the court, undignified altercations with the umpire, sharp practice such as serving before the

opponent is quite ready, are weeds that it is the job of those who look after the lawn-tennis garden to get rid of.

If you start with the attitude that a lawn-tennis match is a thing to be enjoyed—that its rules and usages have been evolved to that end, you will have a better chance of actual success than if you dwell on certain aspects that happen to rub your sensibilities the wrong way. The game of lawn tennis also will flourish even more exceedingly than it does at present if the sporting spirit that upholds it is not allowed to exclude the spirit of joy and mirth.

PART IV

The Rules and their  
Interpretation



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE RULES AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

#### THE RULES OF THE GAME

##### The Singles Game

1.—The Court shall be a rectangle, 78 feet long and 27 feet wide. It shall be divided across the middle by a net, suspended from a cord, or metal cable of a maximum diameter of  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of an inch, the ends of which shall be attached to, or pass over, the tops of two posts, 3 feet 6 inches high, which shall stand 3 feet outside the Court on each side. The height of the net shall be 3 feet at the centre, where it shall be held down taut by a strap not more than 2 inches wide. There shall be a band covering the cord or metal cable and the top of the net for not less than 2 inches nor more than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in depth on each side. The lines bounding the ends and sides of the Court shall respectively be called the Base-lines and the Side-lines. On each side of the net, at a distance

of 21 feet from it and parallel with it, shall be drawn the Service-lines. The space on each side of the net between the service-line and the side-lines shall be divided into two equal parts called the service-courts by the centre service-line, which must be 2 inches in width, drawn half-way between, and parallel with, the side-lines. Each base-line shall be bisected by an imaginary continuation of the centre service-line to a line 4 inches in length and 2 inches in width called the centre-mark drawn inside the Court, at right angles to and in contact with such base-line. All other lines shall be not less than 1 inch nor more than 2 inches in width, except the base-lines, which may be 4 inches in width, and all measurements shall be made to the outside of the lines.

NOTE.—In the case of the International Lawn Tennis Championship (Davis Cup) or other official championships of the International Federation, there shall be a space behind each base-line of not less than 21 feet, and at the sides of not less than 12 feet.

2.—The permanent fixtures of the Court shall include not only the nets, posts, cord or metal cable, strap and band, but also, where there are any such, the back and side stops, the stands, fixed or movable seats and chairs round the Court, and their occupants, all other fixtures around and above the Court,



and the Umpire, Foot-fault Judge and Linesmen when in their respective places.

3.—The ball shall be not less than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches, nor more than  $2\frac{5}{8}$  inches in diameter, and not less than 2 ozs. nor more than  $2\frac{1}{8}$  ozs. in weight. The ball shall have a minimum bound of 50 inches and a maximum bound of 60 inches, when dropped 100 inches at a temperature approximating to 68 degrees Fahrenheit, upon a concrete base.

4.—The players shall stand on opposite sides of the net ; the player who first delivers the ball shall be called the Server, and the other the Receiver.

5.—The choice of sides and the right to be Server or Receiver in the first game shall be decided by toss. If the winner of the toss choose the right to be Server or Receiver, his opponent shall have the choice of sides. If the winner of the toss takes the choice of sides his opponent shall have the right to be Server or Receiver. The winner of the toss, may, if he prefer it, require his opponent to make the first choice.

6.—Immediately before commencing to serve the Server shall stand with both feet

at rest behind (i.e. farther from the net than) the base-line and within the imaginary continuation of the centre-mark and side-line, and thereafter until the service has been delivered the server shall (a) Not change his position by walking or running. (b) Maintain contact with the ground. (c) Keep both his feet behind the base line. (Under Rule 6 (b) both feet must not be off the ground at the same time.)

7.—The service shall be delivered in the following manner. The Server shall project the ball by hand into the air and then strike it with his racket, but a player with the use of only one arm may utilize his racket for such projection. The service shall be deemed to have been delivered at the moment of the impact of the racket and the ball.

8.—The service shall be delivered alternately from behind the right and left halves of the Court, beginning from the right in every game. The ball served shall pass over the net and hit the ground within the Service-Court which is diagonally opposite, or upon any line bounding such Court, before the Receiver returns it.

9.—The service is a fault; (a) If the Server commit any breach of Rules 6, 7 or

8; (b) If he miss the ball in attempting to strike it; (c) If the ball served touch a permanent fixture (other than the net, strap or band) before it hits the ground.

10.—After a fault (if it be the first fault) the Server shall serve again from behind the same half of the Court from which he served that fault, unless it was a fault because he served from behind the wrong half, when he shall be entitled to deliver one service from behind the other half. A fault may not be claimed after delivery of the next service.

11.—The Server shall not serve until the Receiver is ready. If the latter attempt to return the service, he shall be deemed ready. If, however, the Receiver signify that he is not ready, he may not claim a fault because the ball does not hit the ground within the limits fixed for the service.

12.—The service is a let; (a) If the ball served touch the net, strap or band, provided the same be otherwise good; (b) If a service or fault be delivered when the Receiver is not ready (see Rule 11). In case of a let, the service counts for nothing, and the Server shall serve again, but a let does not annul a previous fault.

13.—At the end of the first game the Receiver shall become Server, and the Server Receiver; and so on alternately in all the subsequent games of a match.

14.—A ball is in play from the moment at which it is delivered in service (unless a fault or a let) until the point is decided.

15.—The Server wins a point; (a) If the ball served touch the Receiver or anything which he wears or carries before it hits the ground; (b) If the Receiver otherwise lose a point as provided by Rule 17.

16.—The Receiver wins the point; (a) If the Server serve two consecutive faults; (b) If the Server otherwise lose the point as provided by Rule 17.

17.—A player loses the point if—

- (a) He fail, before the ball in play has hit the ground twice consecutively, to return it directly over the net [except as in Rule 20(c)]; or
- (b) He return the ball in play so that it hits the ground, a permanent fixture, or other object, outside any of the lines which bound his opponent's Court; or

- (c) He volley the ball and fail to make a good return even when standing outside the Court; or
- (d) He touch or strike the ball in play with his racket more than once in making a stroke; or
- (e) He or his racket (in his hand or otherwise) or anything which he wears or carries touch the net, posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band or the ground within his opponent's Court when striking at the ball or at any other time while the ball is in play; or
- (f) He volley the ball before it has passed the net; or
- (g) The ball in play touch him or anything that he wears or carries, except his racket in the act of striking.

18.—A ball falling on a line is regarded as falling in the Court bounded by that line.

19.—If the ball in play touch a permanent fixture (other than the net, posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band) after it has hit the ground, the player who struck it wins the point; if before it hits the ground his opponent wins the point.

20.—It is a good return—

- (a) If the ball touch the net, posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band, provided that it passes over any of them and hits the ground within the Court ;
- (b) If the ball, served or returned, hit the ground within the proper Court and rebound or be blown back over the net, and the player whose turn it is to strike reach over the net and play the ball, provided that neither he nor any part of his clothes or racket touch the net, posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band or the ground within his opponent's Court, and that the stroke be otherwise good ;
- (c) If the ball be returned outside the post, either above or below the level of the top of the net, even though it touch the post, provided that it hits the ground within the proper Court ;
- (d) If a player's racket pass over the net after he has returned the ball, provided the ball pass the net before being played and be properly returned ;
- (e) If a player succeed in returning the

ball, served or in play, which strikes a ball lying in the Court.

21.—In case a player is hindered in making a stroke by anything not within his control, except a permanent fixture of the Court, the point shall be replayed.

22.—If a player wins his first point, the score is called 15 for that player ; on winning his second point, the score is called 30 for that player ; on winning his third point, the score is called 40 for that player, and the fourth point won by a player is scored game for that player, except as below :—

If both players have won three points, the score is called deuce ; and the next point won by a player is scored advantage for that player. If the same player win the next point, he wins the game ; if the other player wins the next point the score is again called deuce ; and so on, until a player wins the two points immediately following the score at deuce, when the game is scored for that player.

23.—The player who first wins six games wins a set except as below :—

If both players have won five games,



the score is called games-all, and the next game won by a player is scored advantage game for that player. If the same player win the next game, he wins the set ; if the other player wins the next game, the score is again called games-all ; and so on until a player wins two games more than his opponent, when the set is scored for that player.

24.—The players shall change sides at the end of the first, third and every subsequent alternate game of each set, and at the end of each set unless the total number of games in such set be even, in which case the change is not made until the end of the first game of the next set.

25.—The maximum number of sets in a match shall be 5, or, if women take part, 3.

26.—Except where otherwise stated, every reference in these Rules to the masculine includes the feminine gender.

27.—In matches where an Umpire is appointed, his decision shall be final ; but where a Referee is appointed, an appeal shall lie to him from the decision of an Umpire

on a question of law, and in all such cases the decision of the Referee shall be final.

The Referee, in his discretion, may at any time postpone a match on account of darkness or the condition of the ground or the weather. In any case of postponement the previous score and previous occupancy of courts shall hold good, unless the Referee and the players unanimously agree otherwise.

28.—Play shall be continuous from the first service till the match be concluded; provided that after the third set, or when women take part, the second set, either player is entitled to a rest, which shall not exceed 10 minutes, and provided further that when necessitated by circumstances not within the control of the players, the Umpire may suspend play for such a period as he may consider necessary. These provisions shall be strictly construed, and play shall never be suspended for the purpose of allowing a player to recover his strength or his wind. The Umpire shall be the sole judge of intentional delay, and after giving due warning he may disqualify the offender.

NOTE.—Any Nation is at liberty to modify the first provision in this rule or omit it from its regulations governing tournaments, matches or competitions held in its own country, other than the International Lawn Tennis Championship (Davis Cup).

## The Doubles Game

29.—The above rules shall apply to the Doubles Game except as below.

30.—For the Doubles Game, the Court shall be 36 feet in width, i.e.,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet wider on each side than the Court for the Singles Game, and those portions of the singles side-lines which lie between the two service-lines shall be called the service-side-lines. In other respects, the Court shall be similar to that described in Rule 1, but the portions of the singles side-lines between the base-line and service-line on each side of the net may be omitted if desired.

31.—The pair who have the right to serve in the first game of each set may decide which partner shall do so, and the opposing pair may decide similarly for the second game. The partner of the player who served in the first game shall serve in the third; the partner of the player who served in the second game shall serve in the fourth, and so on in the same order in all the subsequent games of a set.

The order of service having been arranged may not be altered during the set, but it may be changed at the beginning of each new set. Similarly, the receivers may not change places with each other for the purpose of receiving the service before the end of a set, but they may do so at the beginning of a new set.

32.—The service is a fault as provided for by Rule 9, or if the ball served touch the Server's partner or anything which he wears or carries ; but if the ball served touch the partner of the Receiver or anything which he wears or carries, before it hits the ground, the Server wins the point.

33.—If a player serve out of his turn, the player who ought to have served shall serve as soon as the mistake is discovered, but all points scored, and any fault served before such discovery, shall be reckoned. If a game shall have been completed before such discovery, the order of service shall remain as altered.

34.—The players to receive the service shall receive it alternately throughout each game. The order thus established shall not be altered during the set.

35.—The ball shall be struck alternately by one or other player of the opposing pairs, and if a player touches the ball in play with his racket in contravention of this Rule, his opponents win the point.

### Interpretation of Some of the More Obscure Points

Turning to the rules, there are a few points that beginners may find obscure and that need a little explanation.

In *Rule 3* we read not only the specified dimensions of the balls, but also that they are required to bound to a certain height when bounced on a solid floor. Now every one has suffered from playing with balls that won't bounce properly, than which there is nothing worse for one's game. Also the balls get light whilst still retaining their bounce after they have been played with for some time. In one way or another they quickly wear out: they are thus a fairly expensive item in the game, but, taking everything into due consideration, they are worth it.

*Rule 6*, the service rule, has given rise to more controversy than any other. It is argued by some people that the service gives

such an advantage that the rule ought to be made more severe on the server, and by others that it does not matter so long as no foot is on the ground in front of the service or base-line as the server strikes the ball. The rule, as it stands, is a compromise between these two points of view, requiring that both feet should be behind the line at the instant of impact, though only one of them—it does not matter which, so far as the rule is concerned—need be touching the ground.

Various modifications have been suggested, one of which is that the server should serve from a second line, say a yard, behind the base-line, and be allowed to lift one foot over this line whilst striking the ball. But, needless to say, we are now concerned with the rule as it stands ; and the principal difficulty in adhering to the rule is that it is very difficult both for the server who is looking up into the air, and for anyone else except a linesman actually on the base-line, to tell whether he brings his foot over the line before or after he has struck the ball. (See also the chapter on Service.)

A point arises out of *Rule 7* that is not grasped by some people, namely that, in singles the service may not be delivered from outside the limits of the singles side lines,

whereas in doubles it is the far side lines that set the limits. In *Rule 9 (b)* the words "in attempting to strike it" should be noted. In throwing the ball up, if you find that the throw is a bad one, you may let it drop without attempting to hit it, and then start all over again without being penalized with a fault.

*Rule 11* should be read carefully and be taken to heart, because, in their eagerness, people are often apt to serve before the opponent is ready. If you are not ready, you have to make up your mind to it and refuse definitely and firmly to accept the service. The server then has the right to begin all over again, even though his service was a fault.

*Rule 12* also is sometimes misunderstood. Some people persist in thinking that a service is a let if it touches the net, no matter where it bounces, whereas in fact it must bounce within the limits of the service-court. A very fast service, touching the net, sometimes leaps over the service line. It is then a fault, though that is unlucky for the server, as it would have been the best kind of service if it had just cleared the net instead of just hitting it.



*Rule 15* is often broken through ignorance and generally with impunity. Even the wildest service that reaches the receiver full-pitch must not be touched either with the racket or anything else until it has bounced. If it is touched before it meets the ground, then it counts in favour of the server. Similarly in play, apart from service, *Rule 17 (g)* should be taken to heart, because many people do not realize that they lose the point if the ball, while in play, touches them, even if they are outside the court. The ball *must* bounce before it can be given out, and if it touches a player before it bounces, no matter how far outside the court he be, then the point is given to the other side.

*Rule 20 (g)* for some people may require a little amplification. Providing the ball has crossed the net on to your side before you hit it, you are allowed to follow through with your racket across the net, so long, of course, as you do not touch the net. If the ball crosses the net, bounces, and is blown back or has so much spin that it bounces back over the net, then you may reach over and hit it, so long as you do not touch the net either with your racket or anything else.

As regards section (*e*) of the same rule, many people probably do not know that if

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they succeed in returning the ball after it has struck another ball, carelessly left lying within their court, they may do so. The striking of the ball lying on the court is counted as one bounce, and, if the player can return it afterwards, it is a perfectly good stroke.

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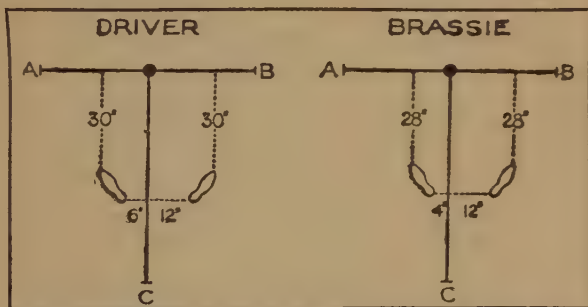
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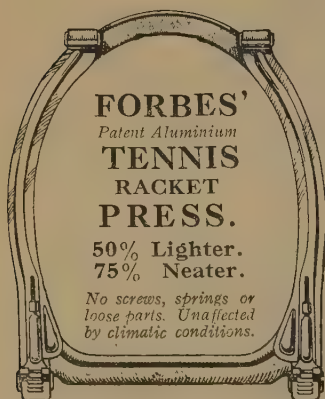
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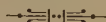
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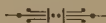
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from the Belize Stores,  
British Honduras:—*

"It may interest you  
to know that the tennis  
doubles championship of  
British Honduras was  
won last Saturday by  
Messrs. T. C. MANDERS  
and J. HUNTER, both of  
whom used Gradidge  
Rackets, recently im-  
ported by us."—BELIZE,  
Jan. 16th, 1925.

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*Illustrated lists free.*

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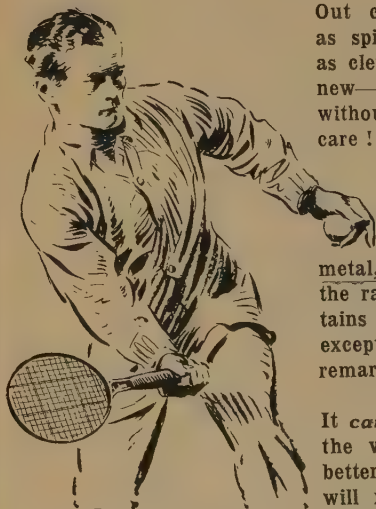
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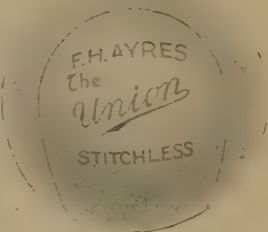
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